SYMPOSIUM

Translated by Seth Benardete

Apollodorus. In my own opinion, I am not unprepared for what you ask about; for just the other day—when I was on my way up to town from my home in Phaleron—one of my acquaintances spotted me a long way off from behind and called, playing with his call: "Phalerian," he said. "You there, Apollodorus, aren't you going to wait?" And I stopped and let him catch up. And he said, "Apollodorus, why, it was just recently that I was looking for you; I had wanted to question you closely about Agathon's party—the one at which Socrates, Alcibiades, and the others were then present at dinner together—to question you about the erotic speeches. What were they? Someone else who had heard about the party from Phoenix the son of Philippus was telling me about it, and he said that you too knew. As a matter of fact, there wasn't anything he could say with certainty. So *you* tell me, for it is most just that you report the speeches of your comrade. But first," he said, "tell me, were you yourself present at this party or not?" And I said, "It really does seem as if there were nothing certain in what your informant told you, if you believe that this party which you are asking about occurred so recently that I too was present." "That is indeed what I believed," he said. "But how could that be, Glaucon?" I said. "Don't you know that it has been many years since Agathon resided here, but that it is scarcely three years now that I have been spending my time with Socrates and have made it my concern on each and every day to know whatever he says or does? Before that, I used to run round and round aimlessly, and though I believed I was doing something of importance, I was more miserable than anyone in the world (no less than you are at this moment), for I believed that everything was preferable to philosophy." And he said, "Don't mock me now,

but tell me when this party did occur." And I said, "When we were still boys, at the time of Agathon's victory with his first tragedy, on the day after he and his choral dancers celebrated the victory sacrifice." "Oh," he said, "a very long time ago, it seems. But who told you? Was it Socrates himself?" "No, by Zeus," I said, "but the same one who told Phoenix. It was a certain Aristodemus, a Kydathenean, little and always unshod. He had been present at the party and, in my opinion, was the one most in love with Socrates at that time. Not, however, that I have not asked Socrates too about some points that I had heard from Aristodemus; and Socrates agreed to just what Aristodemus narrated." "Why, then," Glaucon said, "don't you tell me? The way to town, in any case, is as suitable for speaking, while we walk, as for listening."

So as we walked, we talked together about these things; and so, just as I said at the start, I am not unprepared. If it must be told to you as well, that is what I must do. As for me, whenever I make any speeches on my own about philosophy or listen to others—apart from my belief that I am benefited—how I enjoy it! But whenever the speeches are of another sort, particularly the speeches of the rich and of moneymakers—your kind of talk—then just as I am distressed, so do I pity your comrades, because you believe you are doing something of importance, but in fact it's all pointless. And perhaps you, in turn, believe that I am a wretch; and I believe you truly believe it. I, on the other hand, do not believe it about you, I know it.

Comrade. You are always of a piece, Apollodorus, for you are always slandering yourself and others; and in my opinion you simply believe that—starting with yourself—everyone is miserable except Socrates. And how you ever got the nickname "Softy," I do not know, for you are always like this in your speeches, savage against yourself and others except Socrates.

Apollodorus. My dearest friend, so it is plain as it can be, is it, that in thinking this about myself as well as you I am a raving lunatic?

Comrade. It is not worthwhile, Apollodorus, to argue about this now; just do what we were begging you to do; tell what the speeches were.

Apollodorus. Well, they were somewhat as follows—but I shall just try to tell it to you from the beginning as Aristodemus told it.

He said that Socrates met him freshly bathed and wearing

fancy slippers, which was not Socrates' usual way, and he asked Socrates where he was going now that he had become so beautiful.[1]

And he said, "To dinner at Agathon's, for yesterday I stayed away from his victory celebration, in fear of the crowd, but I did agree to come today. It is just for this that I have got myself up so beautifully—that beautiful I may go to a beauty. But you," he said, "how do you feel about going uninvited to dinner? Would you be willing to do so?"

"And I said," he said, " 'I shall do whatever you say.' "

"Then follow," he said, "so that we may change and ruin the proverb, 'the good go to Agathon's feasts on their own.' Homer, after all, not only ruined it, it seems, but even committed an outrage [*hybris*] on this proverb; for though he made Agamemnon an exceptionally good man in martial matters, and Menelaus a 'soft spearman,' yet when Agamemnon was making a sacrifice and a feast, he made Menelaus come to the dinner uninvited, an inferior to his better's."

He said that when he heard this he said, "Perhaps I too shall run a risk, Socrates—perhaps it is not as you say, but as Homer says, a good-for-nothing going uninvited to a wise man's dinner. Consider the risk in bringing me. What will you say in your defense? For I shall not agree that I have come uninvited but shall say that it was at your invitation."

"With the two of us going on the way together,"[2] he said, "we shall deliberate on what we shall say. Well, let us go."

He said that once they had finished their conversation along these lines, they went on. And as they were making their way Socrates somehow turned his attention to himself and was left behind, and when Aristodemus waited for him, he asked him to go on ahead. When Aristodemus got to Agathon's house, he found the door open, and he said something ridiculous happened to him there. Straight off, a domestic servant met him and brought him to where the others were reclining, and he found them on the point of starting dinner. So Agathon, of course, saw him at once, and said, "Aristodemus, you have come at a fine

[1]The word *beautiful (kalos)*, which is distinct from *good (agathos)*, also means fair, fine, and noble; and everything outstanding in body, mind, or action can be so designated. What is lovable, either to sight or mind, is beautiful. It is the Greek term for what is moral, with the qualification that it designates what is beyond the sphere of obligation and duty, what one cannot expect everyone to do. It has a higher rank than the just.

[2]'Soft spearman' is from *Iliad*, 17.587; the uninvited Menelaus from 2.408; and "With the two of us going on the way together" from 10.224.

time to share a dinner. If you have come for something else, put it off for another time, as I was looking for you yesterday to invite you but could not find you. But how is it that you are not bringing our Socrates?''

''And I turn around,'' he said, ''and do not see Socrates following anywhere. So I said that I myself came with Socrates, on his invitation to dinner here.''

''It is a fine thing for you to do,'' Agathon said, ''but where is he?''

''He was just coming in behind me. I am wondering myself where he might be.''

''Go look, boy,'' Agathon said, ''and bring Socrates in. And you, Aristodemus,'' he said, ''lie down beside Eryximachus.''

And he said the boy washed him so he could lie down; and another of the boys came back to report, ''Your Socrates has retreated into a neighbor's porch and stands there, and when I called him, he was unwilling to come in.''

''That is strange,'' Agathon said. ''Call him and don't let him go.''

And Aristodemus said that he said, ''No, no, leave him alone. That is something of a habit with him. Sometimes he moves off and stands stock still wherever he happens to be. He will come at once, I suspect. So do not try to budge him, but leave him alone.''

''Well, that is what we must do, if it is your opinion,'' he said Agathon said. ''Well now, boys, feast the rest of us. Though you always serve in any case whatever you want to whenever someone is not standing right over you, still now, in the belief that I, your master, as much as the others, has been invited to dinner by you, serve in such a way that we may praise you.''

After this, he said, they dined; but Socrates did not come in, and though Agathon often ordered that Socrates be sent for, Aristodemus did not permit it. Then Socrates did come in—he had lingered as long as was usual for him—when they were just about in the middle of dinner. Then he said that Agathon, who happened to be lying down at the far end alone, said, ''Here, Socrates, lie down alongside me, so that by my touching you, I too may enjoy the piece of wisdom that just occurred to you while you were in the porch. It is plain that you found it and have it, for otherwise you would not have come away beforehand.''

And Socrates sat down and said, ''It would be a good thing,

Agathon, if wisdom were the sort of thing that flows from the fuller of us into the emptier, just by our touching one another, as the water in wine cups flows through a wool thread from the fuller to the emptier. For if wisdom too is like that, then I set a high price on my being placed alongside you, for I believe I shall be filled from you with much fair wisdom. My own may turn out to be a sorry sort of wisdom, or disputable like a dream; but your own is brilliant and capable of much development, since it has flashed out so intensely from you while you are young; and yesterday it became conspicuous among more than thirty thousand Greek witnesses."

"You are outrageous, Socrates," Agathon said. "A little later you and I will go to court about our wisdom, with Dionysus as judge, but now first attend to dinner."

After this, he said, when Socrates had reclined and dined with the rest, they made libations, sang a song to the god and did all the rest of the customary rites,[3] and then turned to drinking. Then Pausanias, he said, began to speak somewhat as follows. "All right, men," he said. "What will be the easiest way for us to drink? Now I tell you that I am really in a very bad way from yesterday's drinking, and I need a rest. I suspect many of you do too, for you were also here yesterday. So consider what would be the easiest way for us to drink."

Aristophanes then said, "That is a good suggestion, Pausanias, to arrange our drinking in some easier way, for I too am one of yesterday's soaks."

Eryximachus, he said, the son of Akoumenos, heard them out and then said, "What a fine thing you say. But I still have need to hear from one of you—from Agathon—how set he is on heavy drinking."

"Not at all," Agathon said, "nor do I have the strength."

"We seem to be in luck," Eryximachus said, "—myself, Aristodemus, Phaedrus, and those here—if you who have the greatest capacity for drink have now given up, for we are always incapable. And I leave Socrates out of account—as he can go either way, he will be content with whatever we do. Now, since in my opinion none of those present is eager to drink a lot of wine, perhaps I should be less disagreeable were I to speak the

[3]The customary rites at the end of a banquet are six in number: 1) a libation of unmixed wine to *agathos daimon* (the "good Genius"); 2) the clearing of the tables; 3) the washing of the hands; 4) the distribution of wreaths among the guests; 5) three libations, one each to Zeus Olympus and the Olympian gods, to the heroes, and to Zeus Soter; 6) the singing of a song to the god.

truth about what drunkenness is. For I believe this has become quite plain to me from the art of medicine. Drunkenness is a hard thing for human beings; and as far as it is in my power, I should neither be willing to go on drinking nor to advise another to do so, particularly if he still has a headache from yesterday's debauch."

"Well, as for myself," he said Phaedrus the Myrrhinousian said, interrupting, "I am used to obeying you, particularly in whatever you say about medicine; and now the rest will do so too, if they take good counsel."

When they heard this, all agreed not to make the present party a drinking bout, but for each to drink as he pleased.

"Since, then, it has been decreed," Eryximachus said, "that each is to drink as much as he wants to, and there is to be no compulsion about it, I next propose to dismiss the flute girl who just came in and to let her flute for herself, or, if she wants, for the women within, while we consort with each other today through speeches. And as to what sort of speeches, I am willing, if you want, to make a proposal."

All then agreed that this was what they wanted and asked him to make his proposal. Eryximachus then said, "The beginning of my speech is in the manner of Euripides' *Melanippe*,[4] for the tale that I am about to tell is not my own, but Phaedrus' here. On several occasions Phaedrus has said to me in annoyance, 'Isn't it awful, Eryximachus, that hymns and paeans have been made by the poets for other gods, but for Eros, who is so great and important a god, not one of the many poets there have been has ever made even a eulogy? And if you want, consider, in their turn, the good Sophists, they write up in prose praises of Heracles and others, as the excellent Prodicus does. Though you need not wonder at this, for I have even come across a volume of a wise man in which salt got a marvelous puff for its usefulness, and you might find many other things of the kind with eulogies. So they employ much zeal in things like that, yet to this day not one human being has dared to hymn Eros in a worthy manner; but so great a god lies in neglect.' Now, Phaedrus, in my opinion, speaks well in this regard. So, as I desire to make a comradely loan to please him, it is, in my opinion, appropriate for those of

[4]The line from Euripides' (mostly lost) *Melanippe* is, "The tale is not my own but from my mother"; and the fragment then goes on: "how sky and earth were one shape; but when they were separated from one another, they gave birth to everything and sent them up into the light, trees, birds, wild beasts, those the salt sea nourishes, and the race of mortals."

us who are now here to adorn the god. And if you share in my opinion, we should find enough of a pastime in speeches. For it is my opinion that each of us, starting on the left, should recite the fairest praise of Eros that he can, and Phaedrus should be the first to begin, inasmuch as he is lying on the head couch and is also the father of the argument."

"No one," Socrates said, "will cast a vote against you, Eryximachus. For I would surely not beg off, as I claim to have expert knowledge of nothing but erotics; nor would Agathon and Pausanias beg off, to say nothing of Aristophanes, whose whole activity is devoted to Dionysus and Aphrodite. And none of the others I see here would refuse either. And yet it is not quite fair for those of us who lie on the last couches; but if those who come first speak in a fine and adequate way, we shall be content. Well, good luck to Phaedrus then. Let him make a start and eulogize Eros."

All the others then approved and urged it as Socrates had done. Now, Aristodemus scarcely remembered all that each and every one of them said, and I in turn do not remember all that he said; but I shall tell you the noteworthy points of those speeches that, in my opinion, most particularly deserved remembering.

First of all, as I say, he said that Phaedrus began his speech at somewhat the following point: that Eros was a great and wondrous god among human beings as well as gods, and that this was so in many respects and not least in the matter of birth. "For the god to be ranked among the oldest is a mark of honor," he said, "and here is the proof: the parents of Eros neither exist nor are they spoken of by anyone, whether prose author or poet; but Hesiod says that Chaos came first—

> Then thereafter
> Broad-breasted Earth, always the safe seat of all,
> And Eros.[5]

After Chaos, he says, there came to be these two, Earth and Eros. And Parmenides says that Genesis,

> First of all gods, devised Eros.

[5]Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 116, 117, 120. Our manuscripts of Hesiod read, after 117, "of all immortals, who hold the tops of snowy Olympus [118], and gloomy Tartarus in the recesses of the broad-wayed Earth [119]." Line 118 is also not read by other sources; and the Hesiod scholium says that line 119 is athetized. After "Eros" in line 120, Hesiod goes on: "who is the most beautiful among the immortal gods, the dissolver of care, who overpowers the mind and thoughtful counsel in the breast of all gods and human beings."

Akousilaus agrees with Hesiod as well. So there is an agreement in many sources that Eros is among the oldest. And as he is the oldest, we have him as the cause of the greatest goods, for I can hardly point to a greater good for someone to have from youth onward than a good lover, and for a lover, a beloved. For that which should guide human beings who are going to live fairly throughout their lives can be implanted by neither blood ties, nor honors, nor wealth, nor anything else as beautifully as by love. Now what do I say this is? It is shame in the face of shameful things and honorable ambition in the face of beautiful things; for without them neither city nor private person can accomplish great and beautiful deeds. So I assert that in the case of any real man who loves, were it to come to light that he was either doing something shameful or putting up with it from another out of cowardice and without defending himself, he would not be as pained on being observed by either his father, his comrades, or anyone else as by his beloved. We observe that this same thing holds in the case of the beloved; he is exceptionally shamed before his lovers whenever he is seen to be involved in something shameful. So if there were any possibility that a city or an army could be composed of lovers and beloveds, then there could be no better way for them to manage their own city; for they would abstain from all that is shameful and be filled with love of honor before one another. And besides, were they to do battle alongside one another, then even a few of this sort would win over just about all human beings; for a real man in love would of course far less prefer to be seen by his beloved than by all the rest when it comes to deserting his post or throwing away his weapons; he would choose to be dead many times over before that happened. And, to say nothing of leaving behind one's beloved or not coming to his aid when he is in danger, there is no one so bad that, once the god Eros had entered him, he would not be directed toward virtue—to the point where he is like one who is best by nature: And simply, as Homer said, 'the strength that the god breathed'[6] into some of the heroes, Eros supplies from himself to lovers.

"And what is more, lovers are the only ones who are willing to die for the sake of another; and that is not only true of real men but of women as well. Alcestis, the daughter of Pelias, offers a sufficient testimony for Greeks on behalf of this argument. She alone was willing to die on behalf of her husband,

[6]At *Iliad*, 10.482, Athena breathes strength into Diomedes, and at 15.262 Apollo does the same for Hector.

though his father and mother were alive; but through her love she so much surpassed his parents in friendship that she showed them up as alien to their own son and only related to him in name. Her performance of this deed was thought to be so noble in the opinion not only of human beings but of the gods as well that, although there have been many who have accomplished many noble deeds, the gods have given to only a select number of them the guerdon of sending up their souls again from Hades, and hers they did send up in admiring delight at her deed. So gods, too, hold in particular esteem the zeal and virtue that pertain to love. Orpheus, the son of Oeagrus, they sent back from Hades unfulfilled; and though they showed him a phantom of his wife, for whom he had come, they did not give her very self to him, because it was thought he was soft, like the lyre player he was, and had not dared to die for love like Alcestis, but contrived to go into Hades alive. Consequently, they imposed a punishment on him, and made him die at the hands of women, and did not honor him as they had Achilles, the son of Thetis. For Achilles they sent away to the Isles of the Blest, because, though he had learned from his mother that he would be killed if he killed Hector, and that if he did not, he would return home and die in old age, still he dared to choose to come to the aid of his lover Patroclus; and with his vengeance accomplished, he dared not only to die on his behalf but to die after him who had died. On this account, the gods were particularly impressed and gave him outstanding honors, because he had made so much of his lover. Aeschylus talks nonsense in claiming that Achilles was in love with Patroclus (rather than the other way around), for Achilles was more beautiful than not only Patroclus but all the other heroes as well; and besides, he was unbearded, and thirdly, far younger than Patroclus, as Homer says.[7] Well, anyhow, though the gods really hold in very high esteem that virtue which concerns love, they wonder, admire, and confer benefits even more when the beloved has affection for the lover than when the lover has it for the beloved. A lover is a more divine thing than a beloved, for he has the god within him. This is the reason why they honored Achilles more than Alcestis and sent him to the Isles of the Blest.

"So this is how I assert that Eros is the oldest, most honorable, and most competent of the gods with regard to the acquisition of virtue and happiness by human beings both when living and dead."

[7]Homer, *Iliad*, 2.673; 11.786.

He said that Phaedrus made some such speech, and after Phaedrus there were some others that he scarcely could recall; he passed them over and told of Pausanias' speech. He said that Pausanias said, "Phaedrus, in my opinion it is not noble the way the argument has been proposed to us—commanding us to eulogize Eros in so unqualified a fashion. For were Eros one, it would be noble, but as it is, it is not noble, for he is not one; and as he is not one, it is more correct that it be declared beforehand which Eros is to be praised. So first I shall try to set the record straight, to point out the Eros who is to be praised, and then to praise him in a manner worthy of the god. We all know that there is no Aphrodite without Eros; and were she one, Eros would be one; but since there are two Aphrodites, it is necessary that there be two Erotes as well. Who would deny that there are two goddesses? One surely is the elder and has no mother, the daughter of Uranos, the one to whom we apply the name Uranian; the other is younger and the daughter of Zeus and Dione, the one we call Pandemus.[8] So it is necessary that the Eros who is a fellow worker with one correctly be called Pandemus, and the other one, Uranian. Now all gods must be praised, but one must still try to say what has been allotted to each god. Every action is of the following sort: When being done in terms of itself, it is neither noble nor base. For example, what we are now doing, either drinking, singing, or conversing, none of these things is in itself a noble thing, only in terms of how it is done in the doing of it does it turn out to be the sort of thing that it is. For if it is done nobly and correctly, it proves to be noble, and if incorrectly, base. So, too, in the case of loving and Eros, for Eros as a whole is not noble nor deserving of a eulogy, but only that Eros who provokes one to love in a noble way.

"Now the Eros who belongs to Aphrodite Pandemus is truly pandemian and acts in any sort of way. And here you have the one whom good-for-nothing human beings have as their love. Those who are of the same sort as this Eros are, first of all, no less in love with women than with boys; secondly, they are in love with their bodies rather than their souls; and thirdly, they are in love with the stupidest there can be, for they have an eye only to the act and are unconcerned with whether it is noble or not. That is how it happens that it turns out for them, however it turns out, with the same likelihood of its being good as the

[8] *Pandemus*, which is a cult title, literally means "common to all the people" and does not necessarily mean something vulgar and base. Pandemian has the same meaning.

opposite. For Eros Pandemus depends on the Aphrodite who is far younger than the other goddess, and who partakes in her birth of female as well as of male. But the other Eros is of Uranian Aphrodite, who, first of all, does not partake of female but only of male (and this is the love of boys); and secondly, is the elder and has no part in outrage. That is how it comes about that those inspired by this kind of love turn to the male, with an affection for that which is naturally more vigorous and has more sense. And one might recognize in pederasty itself those who have been prompted purely by this kind of love; for they do not love boys except when boys start having sense, and that is close to the time when the beard first appears. For those who start loving a boy at this point in time are in a position I believe to be with him and live with him for their whole life and not—once they have deceived and seized a young and foolish boy—to laugh at him and then run away to another. There should have been a law as well to prohibit the loving of boys, in order that a lot of zeal would not have been wasted for an uncertain result; for it is not clear where the perfection of boys has its end with regard to the vice and virtue of both soul and body. Now, the good willingly lay down this law upon themselves, but there should have been applied the same sort of compulsory prohibition to those pandemian lovers, just as we compel them as far as we can not to love freeborn matrons. For here you have those who have made pederasty a disgrace, so that some have the nerve to say that it is shameful to gratify lovers. They say it is shameful with an eye to those pandemian lovers, observing their impropriety and injustice, since surely any action whatsoever that is done in an orderly and lawful way would not justly bring reproach.

"Now in general the law about love in other cities is easy to understand, for it has been simply determined; but the law here and in Sparta is complicated. In Elis and among the Boeotians, and where they are not wise in speaking, the gratification of lovers has been unqualifiedly legalized as noble, and no one, whether young or old, would say that it is shameful. This is so, I suspect, in order that they might have no trouble in trying to persuade the young by speech, because they are incapable of speaking. In Ionia, on the other hand, and in many other places (wherever they live under barbarians), it has been customarily held to be shameful. In the eyes of barbarians, on account of their tyrannies, pederasty as well as philosophy and the love of gymnastics is shameful; for I suspect that it is not to the advantage of the rulers that great and proud thoughts be engendered among

their subjects, any more than strong friendships and associations. It is precisely this that love, as well as all these other things, especially tends to implant. And the tyrants here [in Athens] actually learned this by deed; for the love of Aristogeiton and the friendship of Harmodius, once it became firm, dissolved the tyrants' rule.[9] So wherever it has been laid down as shameful to gratify lovers, it has been through the vice of those who have done so—the hankering after more on the part of the rulers, and the lack of manliness on the part of their subjects; and wherever the gratifying of lovers has been held to be a fine thing without qualification, it has been through the slothfulness of soul of those who have so ordained. But here [in Athens] there are much finer customs than elsewhere; yet just as I said, they are not easy to understand. Let one just reflect that it is said to be a finer thing to love openly than in secret; and particularly to love the noblest and best, even if they are uglier than others; and again, that everyone enthusiastically encourages the lover, and not as if he were doing anything shameful; and if a lover makes a successful capture, it is thought to be fine, and if he fails, shameful; and that, for making an attempt at seizure, the law grants the lover the opportunity to be praised for doing amazing deeds. If one dared to do any of these deeds in pursuing and wishing to accomplish anything else whatsoever except this, one would reap the greatest reproaches leveled against philosophy. For if, in wanting to take money from someone, or to take a governmental office, or any other position of power, one were willing to act just as lovers do toward their beloved—making all sorts of supplications and beseechings in their requests, swearing oaths, sleeping at the doors of their beloveds, and being willing to perform acts of slavishness that not one slave would—he would be checked from acting so by his enemies as much as by his friends, the former reproaching him for his flatteries and servilities, the latter admonishing him and feeling ashamed on his behalf. But if the lover does all of this, there is a grace upon him; and the law allows him to act without reproaching him, on the ground that he is attempting to carry through some exceedingly fine thing; and what is most dreadful, as the many say, is that, if he swears and then departs from his oath, for him alone there is pardon from the gods—for they deny that an oath in sex is an oath. Thus the gods and human beings have made every opportunity available to the lover, as the law here states. Now on

[9]Aristogeiton was the lover of Harmodius, with whom he slew Pisistratus' son Hipparchus in 514 B.C. It did not, however, end the tyranny but made it harsher.

these grounds one might suppose that it is customarily held to be a very fine thing in this city both to love and for lovers to have friends. But on the other hand, when fathers set attendants in charge of the beloveds and prohibit them from conversing with their lovers, and the attendant has this as a standing order, and the beloved's contemporaries and comrades blame him if they see anything like this going on; and the elders, in turn, do not stand in the way of those who cast reproaches or abuse them on the grounds that they are speaking incorrectly—then, if one glances in this direction, one would believe that such a thing is customarily held to be most shameful. This is to be explained, I believe, as follows. The matter is not simple; and, as was said at the start, it is neither noble nor base in itself, but if nobly done, noble, and if basely done, base. Now, it is base to gratify one who is no good and to do so in a bad way; while it is noble to gratify the good and to do so in a noble way. It is the pandemian lover who is no good, the one in love with the body rather than with the soul. He is not even, for example, a lasting lover, because he is in love with a thing that is not lasting either. As soon as the bloom of the body fades—which is what he was in love with—'he is off and takes wing,' having made a foul shame of many speeches and promises. But he who is in love with a good character remains throughout life, for he is welded to what is lasting. So our law, in good and noble fashion, really wants to test these and to have the beloved gratify one group of lovers and escape from the others. On account of this it exhorts lovers to pursue and beloveds to flee, setting up a contest so that there may be a test as to which group the lover belongs and to which the beloved. And because of this, first, to let oneself be caught too quickly is customarily held shameful, since it is precisely the passing of time that is thought to test many things nobly; and secondly, to be caught by money and political power is shameful, regardless of whether a hurt humbles the beloved and prevents him from resisting, or a benefit consisting of money or political favors prevents him from feeling contempt; for neither money nor political favors are thought to be stable or lasting, to say nothing of the fact that in the natural course of things no noble and generous friendship comes out of them. So there is only one way left according to our law, if a beloved is to gratify a lover in a fine way. For just as we have a law that in the case of lovers to be enslaved willingly in any slavery to the beloved is agreed not to be flattery nor a matter of reproach, so too there is only one other willing enslavement that is not a matter of re-

proach. This is the enslavement regarding virtue; for it is customarily held by us that if anyone is willing to devote his care to someone in the belief that he will be better because of him, either in regard to some kind of wisdom or any other part of virtue whatsoever, this willing enslavement is not disgraceful nor is it flattery. So these two laws (the law about pederasty and the law about philosophy and the rest of virtue) must contribute to the same end if it is going to turn out that a beloved's gratification of a lover is noble. For whenever lover and beloved come to the same point, each with a law, the one, in serving a beloved who has granted his favors, would justly serve in anything; and the other, in assisting him who is making him wise and good, would justly assist. And the one is able to contribute to prudence and the rest of virtue, while the other stands in need of them for the acquisition of education and the rest of wisdom. Then and only then—when these laws converge—does it result that a beloved's gratification of his lover is noble; but in any other circumstance it is not. Even to be deceived in this regard is no disgrace; but in all other cases, whether one is deceived or not, it does involve disgrace. If someone granted his favors to a lover for the sake of wealth because he thought him rich, and then were deceived and got no money when the lover was found to be poor, it is no less a disgrace; for a beloved of that sort is thought to display his very self as one who for the sake of money would serve anyone in anything, and this is not noble. So along the same line of argument, were someone to grant his favors because he thought that his lover was good and that he himself would be better through his friendship with this lover, then even if his lover is found to be bad and without virtue, the deception is noble all the same. For he too is thought to have made plain what holds in his own case—that strictly for the sake of virtue and of becoming better he would show his total zeal in everything, and this is the noblest thing of all. Thus, for the sake of virtue alone is it wholly noble to grant one's favors. This is the love of the Uranian goddess, and it is Uranian and very worthwhile for both city and private men, for it compels both the lover himself and the beloved—each in his own case—to exercise much concern for virtue. All the other loves are of the other goddess, the pandemian. Here, Phaedrus," he said, "you have my extemporary contribution to Eros."

With Pausanias' pausation—the wise teach me to talk in such balanced phrases—Aristodemus said that it was Aristophanes' turn to speak; however, he had just got the hiccups (from

satiety or something else) and was unable to speak, but he did say—the doctor Eryximachus was lying on the couch next to him—"Eryximachus, it is only just that you either stop my hiccups or speak on my behalf until I do stop." And Eryximachus said, "Well, I shall do both. I shall talk in your turn, and you, when you stop hiccuping, in mine. And while I am speaking, see if by holding your breath for a long time, you make the hiccups stop; but if they do not, gargle with water. And if they prove very severe, take something with which you might irritate your nose, and sneeze; and if you do this once or twice, even if the hiccups are severe, they will stop." "Go ahead and speak," Aristophanes said. "I shall do the rest."

Then Eryximachus spoke. "Well, in my opinion, since Pausanias made a fine start to his speech but did not adequately complete it, it is necessary for me to try to put a complete end to the argument. Inasmuch as Eros is double, it is, in my opinion, a fine thing to divide him; but that he presides not only over the souls of human beings in regard to the beautiful but also in regard to many other things and in other cases—the bodies of all the animals as well as those things that grow in the earth, and just about all the things that are—that, in my opinion, I have come to see from medicine, our art. For how great and wondrous the god is in his comprehensive aims, both in terms of human things and in terms of divine things! I shall begin my speech with medicine, so that we may venerate that art as well. The nature of bodies has this double Eros, for the health and the sickness of the body are by agreement different and dissimilar; and the dissimilar desires and loves dissimilar things. Now, there is one love that presides over the healthy state, and another over the sickly. Just as Pausanias was saying, it is a fine thing to gratify those who are good among human beings and disgraceful to gratify the intemperate, so too, in the case of men's bodies taken by themselves is it a fine and needful thing to gratify the good and healthy things of each body (this is what has the name 'the medical'); but it is shameful to gratify the bad and sickly things, and one has to abstain from favoring them, if one is to be skilled. For the art of medicine is, to sum it up, the expert knowledge of the erotics of the body in regard to repletion and evacuation; and he who diagnostically discriminates in these things between the noble and base love is the one most skilled in medicine; while he who induces changes, so as to bring about the acquisition of one kind of love in place of the other, and

who, in whatever things where there is no love but there needs must be, has the expert knowledge to instill it, or to remove it from those things in which it is [but should not be], would be a good craftsman. For he must, in point of fact, be able to make the things that are most at enmity in the body into friends and to make them love one another. The most opposite things are the most at enmity: cold and hot, bitter and sweet, dry and moist, and anything of the sort. Our ancestor Asklepios, who had the expert knowledge to instill love and unanimity into these things—as the poets here assert and as I am convinced is so—put together our art. Not only medicine, as I say, is entirely captained by this god, but likewise gymnastics and farming. And it is plain to anyone who pays the slightest attention that music is also on the same level as these—as perhaps Heracleitus too wants to say, though as far as his actual words go, what he says is not fine. For he says that the one 'alone in differing with itself agrees with itself,' 'as is the harmony of lyre and bow.'[10] It is a lot of nonsense to affirm that a harmony differs with itself or is composed of still differing things. But perhaps he wanted to say that, from the prior differences between the high and the low, there arises from their later agreement a harmony by means of the art of music; for there surely would no longer be a harmony from high and low notes while they were differing with each other; for harmony is consonance, and consonance is a kind of agreement. But it is impossible to derive agreement from differing things as long as they are differing; and it is impossible, in turn, to fit together the differing or nonagreeing—just as rhythm arises from the fast and the slow, from their prior state of difference and their subsequent agreement. Here, music inserts agreement in all these things (just as, there, medicine does) as it instills mutual love and unanimity; and music, in turn, is expert knowledge of the erotics of harmony and rhythm. And in the simple constitution of harmony and rhythm it is not at all hard to diagnose the erotics, for the double eros is not yet present there; but whenever rhythm and harmony have to be employed in regard to human beings, either by making rhythm and harmony (what they call lyric poetry) or by using correctly the songs and meters that have been made (what has been called education), it is difficult and a good craftsman is needed. For the same argument returns here—

[10]The complete fragment (Diels-Kramz) runs: "They do not know how it [presumably the one] in differing with itself agrees with itself: a counterturning fitting together [harmony] as that of bow and lyre." "Counter-straining" is an old variant for "counterturning."

namely, that decent human beings must be gratified, as well as those who are not as yet decent, so that they might become more decent; and the love of the decent must be preserved. And this love is the beautiful one, the Uranian, the Eros of the Uranian Muse. But the pandemian one is Polyhymnia's, which must, whenever it is applied, be applied cautiously, in order that it might harvest its own pleasure but not instill any intemperance—just as in our art it is a large order to employ in a fair way the desires that cluster around the art of making delicacies so as to harvest their pleasure without illness. And in general, in music, in medicine, and in all other things—the human and the divine—each Eros must be watched as far as practicable; for both of the Erotes are present in these things. The composition of the seasons of the year, for example, is also full of both these Erotes; and whenever the hot and the cold, and the dry and the moist, which I mentioned before, obtain decent love for each other and accept a moderate harmony and mixture, they come bearing good seasonableness and health to human beings and to the rest of the animals and plants and commit no injustice. But whenever Eros with his hybris proves to be too strong with regard to the seasons of the year, he corrupts and commits injustice against many things. For plagues as well as many other diseases are wont to arise for wild beasts and plants from things like that. Frosts, for example, and hailstorms and blights arise from the greediness and disorderliness of such erotic things in relation to one another; and the science of these erotic things in regard to the revolutions of stars and seasons of the years is called astronomy. Furthermore, all the sacrifices and things over which divination presides—these are concerned with the communing of gods and human beings with one another—involve almost nothing else but the protection and healing of Eros. For impiety as a whole is wont to arise if one does not gratify the decent Eros and honor and venerate him in every deed, but instead gratifies and honors the other one, in matters that concern parents, both living and dead, and gods. And so it is, accordingly, that divination is charged with the overseeing and healing of lovers; and divination, in turn, is the craftsman of friendship between gods and human beings, since it has expert knowledge of human erotics, as far as erotics has to do with sacred law and piety.

"This is the great and overwhelming power that Eros as a whole has (and indeed it is rather close to total power); but the Eros concerned with good things, consummately perfected with

moderation and justice, among us and among gods, this has the greatest power and provides us with every kind of happiness, making us able to associate with one another and to be friends even with the gods who are stronger than we are. Now, perhaps in praising Eros I too am omitting many things; but I have done that unwillingly. For if I did omit anything, it is your job, Aristophanes, to fill it in; or if you intend to make a different eulogy of the god, proceed to do so, since you have stopped hiccuping."

He then said that Aristophanes accepted and said, "It has stopped, to be sure; not, however, before sneezing had been applied to it. So I wonder at the orderly decency of the body desiring such noises and garglings as a sneeze is; for my hiccuping stopped right away as soon as I applied the sneeze to it."

And Eryximachus said, "My good Aristophanes, look at what you are doing. You have made [us] laugh just as you were about to speak; and you compel me to be a guardian of your own speech, lest you ever say anything laughable—though you did have the chance to speak in peace."

And Aristophanes laughed and said, "You have made a good point, Eryximachus, and please let what has been said be as if it were never spoken. But do not be my guardian, for in what is about to be said I am not afraid to say laughable things—for that would be a gain and native to our Muse—but only things that are laughed at."

"You believe you can hit and run, Aristophanes," he said, "but pay attention and speak as though you are to render an account; perhaps, however, if I so resolve, I shall let you go."

"Well, Eryximachus," Aristophanes said, "I do intend to speak in a somewhat different vein from that in which you and Pausanias spoke. Human beings, in my opinion, have been entirely unaware of the power of Eros, since if they were aware of it, they would have provided the greatest sanctuaries and altars for him, and would be making him the greatest sacrifices, and not act as they do now when none of this happens to him, though it most certainly should. For Eros is the most philanthropic of gods, a helper of human beings as well as a physician dealing with an illness the healing of which would result in the greatest happiness for the human race. So I shall try to initiate you into his power; and you will be the teachers of everyone else. But you must first understand human nature and its afflictions. Our nature in the past was not the same as now but of a

different sort. First of all, the races of human beings were three, not two as now, male and female; for there was also a third race that shared in both, a race whose name still remains, though it itself has vanished. For at that time one race was androgynous, and in looks and name it combined both, the male as well as the female; but now it does not exist except for the name that is reserved for reproach. Secondly, the looks of each human being were as a whole round, with back and sides in a circle. And each had four arms, and legs equal in number to his arms, and two faces alike in all respects on a cylindrical neck, but there was one head for both faces—they were set in opposite directions—and four ears, and two sets of genitals, and all the rest that one might conjecture from this. Each used to walk upright too, just as one does now, in whatever direction he wanted; and whenever he had the impulse to run fast, then just as tumblers with their legs straight out actually move around as they tumble in a circle, so did they, with their eight limbs as supports, quickly move in a circle. It is for this reason that the races were three and of this sort: because the male was in origin the offspring of the sun; the female, of the earth; and the race that shared in both, of the moon—since the moon also shares in both. And they themselves were globular, as was their manner of walking, because they were like their parents. Now, they were awesome in their strength and robustness, and they had great and proud thoughts, so they made an attempt on the gods. And what Homer says about Ephialtes and Otus,[11] is said about them—that they attempted to make an ascent into the sky with a view to assaulting the gods. Then Zeus and the other gods deliberated as to what they should do with them. And they were long perplexed, for the gods knew neither how they could kill them and (just as they had struck the giants with lightning) obliterate the race—for, in that case, their own honors and sacrifices from human beings would vanish—nor how they could allow them to continue to behave licentiously. Then Zeus thought hard and says, 'In my own opinion,' he said, 'I have a device whereby human beings would continue to exist and at the same time, having become weaker, would stop their licentiousness. I shall now cut each of them in two,' he said; 'and they will be both weaker and more useful to us through the increase in their numbers. And they will walk upright on two legs. But if they are thought to behave licentiously still, and are unwilling to keep quiet, then I shall cut them again

[11]Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.305–320; *Iliad*, 5.385–391.

in two,' he said, 'so that they will go hopping on one leg.' As soon as he said this he began to cut human beings in two, just like those who cut sorb-apples in preparation for pickling, or those who cut eggs with hairs. And whenever he cut someone, he had Apollo turn the face and half the neck around to face the cut, so that in beholding his own cutting the human being might be more orderly; and he had him heal all the rest. Apollo turned the face around; and by drawing together the skin from everywhere toward what is now called the belly (just like drawstring bags) he made one opening, which he tied off in the middle of the belly, and that is what they call the navel. He shaped up the chest and smoothed out many of the other wrinkles, with somewhat the same kind of tool as shoemakers use in smoothing the wrinkles in leather on the last; but he left a few wrinkles, those on the belly itself and the navel, to be a reminder of our ancient affliction. When its nature was cut in two, each—desiring its own half—came together; and throwing their arms around one another and entangling themselves with one another in their desire to grow together, they began to die off due to hunger and the rest of their inactivity, because they were unwilling to do anything apart from one another; and whenever one of the halves did die and the other was left, the one that was left tried to seek out another and entangle itself with that, whether it met the half of the whole woman—and that is what we now call a woman—or of a man; and so they continued to perish. But Zeus took pity on them and supplies another device: He rearranges their genitals toward the front—for up till then they had them on the outside, and they generated and gave birth not in one another but in the earth, like cicadas—and for this purpose, he changed this part of them toward the front, and by this means made generation possible in one another, by means of the male in the female; so that in embracing, if a man meets with a woman, they might generate and the race continue; and if male meets with male, there might at least be satiety in their being together; and they might pause and turn to work and attend to the rest of their livelihood. So it is really from such early times that human beings have had, inborn in themselves, Eros for one another—Eros, the bringer-together of their ancient nature, who tries to make one out of two and to heal their human nature. Each of us, then, is a token of a human being, because we are sliced like fillets of sole, two out of one; and so each is always in search of his own token. Now all who are the men's slice from the common genus, which was then called androgynous, are lovers

of women; and many adulterers have been of this genus; and, in turn, all who are women of this genus prove to be lovers of men and adulteresses. And all women who are sliced off from woman hardly pay attention to men but are rather turned toward women, and lesbians arise from this genus. But all who are male slices pursue the males; and while they are boys—because they are cutlets of the male—they are friendly to men and enjoy lying down together with and embracing men; and these are the best of boys and lads, because they are naturally the manliest. Some, to be sure, assert that such boys are shameless, but they lie. For it is not out of shamelessness that they do this but out of boldness, manliness, and masculinity, feeling affection for what is like to themselves. And there is a great proof of this, for once they have reached maturity, only men of this kind go off to political affairs. When they are fully grown men, they are pederasts and naturally pay no attention to marriage and procreation, but are compelled to do so by the law; whereas they would be content to live unmarried with one another. Now it is one of this sort who wholly becomes a pederast and passionate lover, always feeling affection for what is akin to himself. And when the pederast or anyone else meets with that very one who is his own half, then they are wondrously struck with friendship, attachment, and love, and are just about unwilling to be apart from one another even for a short time. And here you have those who continue through life with one another, though they could not even say what they want to get for themselves from one another. For no one would be of the opinion that it was sexual intercourse that was wanted, as though it were for this reason—of all things—that each so enjoys being with the other in great earnestness; but the soul of each plainly wants something else. What it is, it is incapable of saying, but it divines what it wants and speaks in riddles. If Hephaestus with his tools were to stand over them as they lay in the same place and were to ask, 'What is it that you want, human beings, to get for yourselves from one another?'—and if in their perplexity he were to ask them again, 'Is it this you desire, to be with one another in the very same place, as much as is possible, and not to leave one another night and day? For if you desire that, I am willing to fuse you and make you grow together into the same thing, so that—though two—you would be one; and as long as you lived, you would both live together just as though you were one; and when you died, there again in Hades you would be dead together as one instead of as

two. So see if you love this and would be content if you got it.' We know that there would not be even one who, if he heard this, would refuse, and it would be self-evident that he wants nothing else than this; and he would quite simply believe he had heard what he had been desiring all along: in conjunction and fusion with the beloved, to become one from two. The cause of this is that this was our ancient nature and we were wholes. So love is the name for the desire and pursuit of the whole. And previously, as I say, we were one; but now through our injustice we have been dispersed by the god, just as the Arcadians were dispersed by the Spartans. There is the fear, then, that if we are not orderly in our behavior to the gods, we shall be split again and go around like those who are modeled in relief on stelae, sawed through our nostrils, like dice. For this reason every real man must be exhorted to be pious toward the gods in all his acts, so that we may avoid the one result and get the other, as Eros is our guide and general. Let no one act contrary to Eros—and he acts contrary whoever incurs the enmity of the gods—for if we become friends and reconciled to the gods, we shall find out and meet with our own favorites, which few at the moment do. And please don't let Eryximachus suppose, in making a comedy of my speech, that I mean Pausanias and Agathon—perhaps they have found their own and are both naturally born males. For whatever the case may be with them, I am referring to all men and women: our race would be happy if we were to bring our love to a consummate end, and each of us were to get his own favorite on his return to his ancient nature. And if this is the best, it must necessarily be the case that, in present circumstances, that which is closest to it is the best; and that is to get a favorite whose nature is to one's taste. And were we to hymn the god who is the cause of this we should justly hymn Eros, who at the present time benefits us the most by leading us to what is our own; and in the future he offers the greatest hopes, while we offer piety to the gods, to restore us to our ancient nature and by his healing make us blessed and happy.

"Here, Eryximachus," he said, "is my speech about Eros, different from yours. So, just as I begged you, don't make a comedy of it, in order that we may listen to what each of the others—or rather, what each of the two—will say; for Agathon and Socrates are left."

"Well, I shall obey you," he said Eryximachus said. "Your speech was indeed a pleasure for me. And if I did not know that both Socrates and Agathon were skilled in erotics, I should be

very much afraid of their being at a loss for words on account of the fullness and variety of what has been said; but as it is, I am confident."

Socrates then said, "That is because you yourself put up a fine show in the contest, Eryximachus; but if you were where I am now, or rather where I shall be when Agathon has spoken well, then you would really be afraid and as wholly baffled as I am now."

"You want to bewitch me, Socrates," Agathon said. "You would have me believe that the audience is full of expectation that I shall speak well, and in that way, I shall be in a turmoil."

"I should surely be forgetful, Agathon," Socrates said, "if I did that. I saw your courage and greatness of mind in mounting the platform with the actors and in facing so large an audience when you were about to display your own speeches, and I saw that you were in no way disturbed—should I now believe that you will be in a turmoil on account of us few human beings?"

"What's this, Socrates?" Agathon said. "You really do not believe that I am so wrapped up in the theater as not to know that to a man of sense a few who are sensible are more terrifying than many fools?"

"Well, I should surely be in disgrace, Agathon," he said, "were I to presume any lack of urbanity in you; for I know very well that were you to meet any you believed wise, you would think more of them than of the many. But I suspect that we shall not prove to be of the wise, for we too were present there and were part of the many; but if you were to meet others who were indeed wise, then you might be ashamed before them—if you were perhaps to believe that you were doing something that is disgraceful. Is this what you mean?"

"What you say is true."

"But you would not be ashamed before the many if you believed you were doing something disgraceful?"

Phaedrus then interrupted and said, "Dear Agathon, if you answer Socrates, it will not make any difference to him what effect this might have on our present arrangements, provided only that he has someone to converse with, especially if he is beautiful. And I myself listen to Socrates' conversation with pleasure; but I am compelled to attend to the eulogy to Eros and to receive from each one of you your speech; so let each of you repay the god and then go on conversing as you were."

"Well, what you say is fine, Phaedrus," Agathon said,

"and nothing keeps me from speaking; for it will be possible for me to converse with Socrates on many other occasions.

"I want first to say how I must speak, and then to speak. For in my own opinion all the previous speakers did not eulogize the god but blessed human beings for the goods of which the god is the cause; yet no one has said what sort is he who makes these gifts. There is one proper manner in every praise of anything: to tell in speech—whomever the speech is about—what sort he is and what sort of things he causes. This is the just way for us too to praise Eros—first what sort he is, and then his gifts. I declare that though all gods are happy, Eros (if sacred law allow it and it be without nemesis to say so) is the happiest of them, as he is the most beautiful and the best. As the most beautiful he is of the following sort: First, he is the youngest of gods, Phaedrus; and he by himself supplies a great proof for this assertion, for with headlong flight he avoids old age—swift though it plainly is, coming on us, at any rate, swifter than he should. It is precisely old age that Eros naturally detests; he does not even come within hailing distance of it. He is always with and of the young. For the old saying holds good, that like to like always draws near. Though I agree with Phaedrus in many other respects, I do not agree that Eros is more ancient than Kronos and Iapetos; but I affirm his being the youngest of gods and ever young. And the events of old about gods of which Hesiod and Parmenides speak belong to Necessity and not Eros, if what they say is true. Otherwise there would not have been castrations and bindings of each other, and many other acts of violence among the gods, had Eros been among them; but there would have been friendship and peace, just as there is now since Eros became king of the gods. So he is young, and besides being young, he is tender. But there is need of a poet as good as Homer was to show a god's tenderness. Homer says that Ate is a goddess and tender—her feet at any rate are tender—saying:

> 'Tender are her feet, for she does not on the threshold
> Draw near, but lo! she walks on the heads of men.'[12]

So in my opinion it is with a fine piece of evidence that he shows her softness, because she walks not on the hard but on the soft. And we too shall use the same piece of evidence about Eros to prove that he is soft; for not upon earth does he walk nor even

[12]Homer, *Iliad*, 19.92–3.

on skulls, which are hardly soft, but on the softest of beings he walks and dwells. For he has set up his dwelling place in the characters and souls of gods and human beings, and not in each and every soul—for whichever soul he finds to have a hard character, he goes away from, and whichever he finds to have a soft one he dwells in. So, as he is always touching with his feet and every other part the softest of the softest, it is necessary that he be most tender. Now besides being youngest and tenderest, he is supple in his looks. Otherwise he would not be able to fold himself around everywhere, nor to be unobserved on first entering or on departing from every soul, if he were hard. The harmony of his figure is a great piece of evidence for his proportioned and supple appearance, and on all sides it is agreed that Eros is exceptionally harmonious; for lack of harmony and Eros are always at war with one another. The god's way of living among blooming flowers means that his complexion is beautiful; for Eros does not settle on what is fading and has passed its bloom, whether it be body or soul or anything else, but wherever a place is blooming and scented, there he settles and remains.

"Now this is enough about beauty as attributable to the god, though many points are still omitted; but Eros' virtue must next be spoken of. The greatest thing is that Eros neither commits injustice nor has injustice done to him, neither against a god nor by a god, neither against a human being nor by a human being. For it is not by violence that Eros is affected, if he is affected at all—for violence does not touch him; nor does he act with violence, for everyone of his own accord serves Eros in everything. And whatever anyone of his own accord agrees upon with another of his own accord, the 'royal laws of the city' declare to be just. And besides the share he has in justice he has his fullest share in moderation. For it is agreed that to be moderate means to dominate over pleasures and desires; but no pleasure is stronger than Eros; and if other pleasures are weaker, they will be dominated by Eros; and since it is he who is dominant, then in dominating pleasures and desires Eros must be exceptionally moderate. And besides, in point of courage, 'not even Ares resists' Eros; for Ares does not possess Eros (for Aphrodite, as the story goes), but Eros Ares. And he who possesses is stronger than he who is possessed; and in dominating the bravest of all the rest, he must be the bravest. Now that the god's justice, moderation, and courage have been mentioned, all that remains is wisdom; so, as far as I can, I must try to

supply the omission. And first—that I too might honor our art as Eryximachus did his—the god is a poet of such wisdom that he can make poets of others too; at any rate, everyone whom Eros touches proves to be a poet, 'though he be without the Muses before.' We can, accordingly, properly make use of this fact to infer that in every kind of musical making [i.e., poetry] Eros is a good poet [maker]; for what one does not have and does not know, one could neither give to another nor teach another. And who will oppose the fact that the making of all animals is nothing but Eros' wisdom, by which all the animals come to be and grow? And don't we know that, in the case of the arts, whomever this god teaches turns out to be renowned and conspicuous in craftsmanship, and that he whom Eros does not touch remains obscure? Archery, for example, medicine, and divination were invented by Apollo when desire and love were his guides; and thus he too must be a pupil of Eros, as are the Muses in music, Hephaestus in blacksmithing, Athena in weaving, and Zeus 'the captain of gods and human beings.' So it is plain that, when Eros came to be among them, the affairs of the gods were arranged out of love of beauty—for there is no eros present in ugliness. But before that, as I said at the start, many awesome events took place among the gods, as is said, through the monarchy of Necessity; whereas since the birth of this god, all good things have resulted for gods as well as for human beings from loving the beautiful things.

"Thus Eros, in my opinion, Phaedrus, stands first, because he is the fairest and the best, and, after this, he is the cause for everyone else of the same sort of fair and good things. It occurs to me to say something in meter too, that he is the one who makes

> Peace among human beings, on the open sea calm
> And cloudlessness, the resting of winds and sleeping of care.

He empties us of estrangement, he fills us with attachment; he arranges in all such gatherings as this our coming together with one another; in festivals, in dances, in sacrifices he proves himself a guide; furnishing gentleness, banishing wildness; loving giver of amity, no giver of enmity; gracious, good; spectacular to the wise, wonder-ful to the gods; enviable to the have-nots, desirable to the haves; father of luxury, splendor, glory, graces,

yearning, and longing—caring for good ones, careless of bad ones; in toiling, in fearing, in longing, in speaking, the best governor, mariner, fellow warrior, and savior; the ornament of all gods and human beings, the fairest and best guide, whom every real man must follow hymning beautifully, and sharing the song Eros sings in charming the thought of all gods and human beings.

"Here, Phaedrus, you have the speech from me," he said. "Let it be dedicated to the god, sharing, as far as I am able, partly in playfulness, partly in measured earnestness."

Aristodemus said that when Agathon had finished speaking, all those present applauded vigorously, as the youth had spoken in a way as suited to himself as to the god. Socrates then said, with a glance at Eryximachus, "Son of Akoumenos," he said, "is it your opinion that my long-standing fear was groundless, and that I was not prophetic, when I said before that Agathon would speak in a marvelous way, and that I should be at a loss?"

"In my opinion," Eryximachus said, "your first point was indeed prophetic, that Agathon would speak well; but as to the other, that you would be at a loss, that I do not believe."

"You blessed innocent! How can you say that?" Socrates said. "Am I and anyone else whatsoever not to be at a loss after so fair and varied a speech has been made? Though the rest was not quite so marvelous, that bit at the end—who would not be thunderstruck on hearing the beauty of its words and phrases? I for my part, on reflecting that I myself should be unable to say anything nearly as beautiful, almost ran off and was gone in shame—if I had any place to go. For the speech reminded me of Gorgias; so I was simply affected as in the saying of Homer's. I was afraid that Agathon in his speech would at last send the head of the dread speaker Gorgias against my speeches and turn me to very stone in speechlessness.[13] And then I realized that, after all, I am to be laughed at for having agreed to eulogize Eros in turn with you, and for claiming that I was skilled in erotics; for as it has turned out, I know nothing of the matter, nor how one is to eulogize anything. For in my stupidity I believed the truth had to be told about anything that was given a eulogy, and that this was the underpinning, and that by selecting the most beautiful parts of the truth one was to arrange them in the seemliest manner possible. And I was quite filled with the proud thought that I should speak well, since I knew the truth about praising any-

[13]A pun on Gorgias and Gorgon, whose head Odysseus was afraid Persephone would send against him if he lingered in Hades (*Odyssey* 11.632). "Dread speaker" also means "skilled speaker."

thing. But it was not this after all, it seems, that was meant by the fair praising of anything, but the attribution to the matter at hand of the greatest and fairest things possible regardless of whether this was so or not. And if the praise were false, it was of no importance anyway; for the injunction was, it seems, that each of us should be thought to eulogize Eros, and not just eulogize him. It is for this reason, I suspect, that you leave no argument unturned and dedicate each and every argument to Eros. And you assert that he is of this sort and that sort and the cause of so many things, so that he may seem to be as beautiful and good as possible—plainly to those who do not know, for this surely is not the case for those who do know—and so the praise turns out to be beautiful and awesome. But after all I did not know that this was to be the manner of praise, and in ignorance I came to an agreement with you that I would take my turn in praising. 'So the tongue promised but the mind did not';[14] let me then call it quits. I am not a eulogist in this fashion: I am simply incapable of it. Not that I am unwilling—on the contrary I am willing—if you want, to tell the truth on my own terms, so long as my words are not to be compared with your speeches, lest I be laughed at. Decide, then, Phaedrus, if you have any need for such a speech too, for hearing the truth being said about Eros, even though the phrasing and arrangement of the sentences just fall as they come."

He said that Phaedrus and the others urged Socrates to speak in whatever way he himself believed he had to speak.

"Allow me further, Phaedrus," he said, "to ask Agathon about a few small points, in order that when I have got him to agree with me I can go ahead and speak."

"Well, I allow it," Phaedrus said. "Ask." After this he said that Socrates began from somewhat the following point.

"Well, dear Agathon, in my opinion you made a fine start to your speech, in saying that one had to show first what sort of being Eros himself is, and then his deeds. I very much admire this beginning. So come now, since you have explained fairly and magnificently all the rest about what sort he is, then tell me this as well about Eros: is Eros the sort that is love of something or of nothing? I am not asking whether he is of a mother or of a father (for the question whether Eros is love of mother or father would be laughable), but just as if I asked about this very word, *father*—is the father father of someone or not? You should

[14]Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 612: "The tongue swore, but the mind did not."

doubtless tell me, if you wanted to give a fair reply, that the father is father of a son or daughter. Isn't that so?''

''Of course,'' Agathon said.

''And the same is true of the mother?'' This too was agreed upon.

''Answer me just a little more,'' Socrates said, ''so that you might come to understand better what I want. Suppose I asked, 'What about this point? Is a brother, just in terms of what he is, a brother of someone, or isn't he?' '' He answered that he is.

''And of a brother or a sister, right?'' He agreed.

''Do try, then,'' he said, ''to tell about love as well. Is Eros love of nothing or something?''

''Of course he is of something.''

''Keep this fast in your memory, this something of which you claim he is,'' Socrates said, ''but now say only this much: That Eros that is the love of something, does he desire this something or not?''

''Of course he does,'' he said.

''And is it when he has, or does not have, that which he desires and loves, that he desires and loves it?''

''It is at least likely that he does not have it,'' he said.

''Think,'' Socrates said, ''is it not a necessity rather than a likelihood that the desirous thing desires what it is in need of, and does not desire unless it is in need? For in my opinion, Agathon, it is a marvelous necessity. What is your opinion?''

''It's my opinion too,'' he said.

''What you say is fair. Would anyone want to be tall if he were tall, or strong if he were strong?''

''From what has been agreed upon, that would be impossible.''

''For he surely would not be in need of those things that he already is.''

''What you say is true.''

''So that if he wanted to be strong being strong,'' Socrates said, ''and swift being swift, and healthy being healthy—I say this so that we may not deceive ourselves, for one might perhaps suppose with regard to these and all cases of this sort that those who are of this sort and have these things desire those things that they have—but if you have these cases in mind, Agathon, then who would desire each of those things that of necessity he has at the moment when, whether he wants to or not, he has it? For whenever anyone says, 'I am healthy and want to be healthy or I am wealthy and want to be wealthy, and I desire those very things that I have,' we should tell him, 'You, human being,

possessing wealth, health, and strength, want to possess them also in the future, since at the present moment at least, whether you want to or not, you have them. Consider then, whenever you say, "I want the present things," if you mean anything else than, "I want the things of the present moment to be present also in future time." Would he agree to that?" Aristodemus said that Agathon consented.

Socrates then said, "To want that those things be safe and present for him in future time, is to love that which is not yet at hand for him and which he does not have."

"Of course," he said.

"So he and everyone else who desires what is not at hand desires what is not present; and what he does not have and what he himself is not and what he is in need of—it is things like that of which desire and love are, right?"

"Of course," he said.

"Come then," Socrates said. "Let us draw up an agreement about what has been said. Eros is love, first of all, of some things, and secondly, of whatever things the need for which is present to him."

"Yes," he said.

"Would you now think back then to what you asserted Eros to be of in your speech; but if you want, I shall remind you. I believe you spoke somewhat along these lines—that matters were arranged by the gods through love of beautiful things, for there would not be love of ugly things. Weren't you speaking somewhat along these lines?"

"I said so," Agathon said.

"And what you say is reasonable, comrade," Socrates said. "And if this is so, Eros would be nothing else than love of beauty, but not of ugliness?" He agreed.

"Hasn't it been agreed that that of which one is in need and does not have one loves?"

"Yes," he said.

"So Eros is in need of and does not have beauty."

"Of necessity," he said.

"What about this? That which is in need of beauty and in no way possesses beauty, do you say that it is beautiful?"

"Certainly not."

"Do you still agree then that Eros is beautiful, if this is so?"

And Agathon said, "It's probable, Socrates, that I knew nothing of what I had said."

"And yet spoke you beautifully, Agathon," he said. "But, still, tell me about a small point. Are the good things beautiful as well in your opinion?"

"Yes, in mine."

"So if Eros is in need of beautiful things, and the good things are fair, he would be in need of the good things as well."

"I, Socrates," he said, "would not be able to contradict you; so let it be as you say."

"Not at all, my dear Agathon. It is rather that you are unable to contradict the truth," he said, "since it is not at all hard to contradict Socrates.

"And I shall let you go for now, and turn to the speech about Eros that I once heard from a woman, Diotima of Mantineia. She was wise in these and many other things; when the Athenians once made a sacrifice before the plague, she caused the onset of the disease to be delayed ten years; and she is the very one who taught me erotics. The speech that she was wont to make, I shall now try to tell you all on the basis of what has been agreed on between Agathon and myself; and I shall try to do it on my own, as best I can. For just as you explained, Agathon, one must first tell who Eros himself is and what sort he is, and then tell his deeds. In my opinion, it is easiest to do this in just the same way that the stranger once did in quizzing me. For I came pretty near, in speaking to her, to saying the same sort of things that Agathon said to me now—that Eros was a great god, and was the love of beautiful things. She then went on to refute me with those same arguments with which I refuted him—that he is neither beautiful, according to my argument, nor good.

"And I said, 'How do you mean it, Diotima? Is Eros after all ugly and bad?'

"And she said, 'Hush! Or do you believe that whatever is not beautiful must necessarily be ugly?'

" 'Absolutely.'

" 'And whatever is not wise, without understanding? Or were you unaware that there is something in between wisdom and lack of understanding?'

" 'What is this?'

" 'Don't you know,' she said, 'that to opine correctly without being able to give an account [*logos*] is neither to know expertly (for how could expert knowledge be an unaccounted for [*alogon*] matter?) nor lack of understanding (for how could lack of understanding be that which has hit upon what is)? But surely

correct opinion is like that, somewhere between intelligence and lack of understanding.'

" 'What you say is true,' I said.

" 'Then do not compel what is not beautiful to be ugly, or what is not good, to be bad. So too since you yourself agree that Eros is not good or beautiful, do not at all believe that he must be ugly and bad,' she said, 'but something between the two of them.'

" 'And yet,' I said, 'it is agreed on by all that he is a great god.'

" 'Do you mean by all who do not know,' she said, 'or by those who know?'

" 'No, by all together.'

"And she said with a laugh, 'And how, Socrates, could he be agreed to be a great god by those who deny even that he is a god?'

" 'Who are these?' I said.

" 'You are one,' she said, 'and I am one.'

"And I said, 'How can you say this?' I said.

"And she said, 'It's easy. Tell me, don't you assert that all gods are happy and beautiful? Or would you dare to deny that any one of the gods is beautiful and happy?'

" 'By Zeus, I would not,' I said.

" 'But don't you mean by the happy precisely those who possess the good things and the beautiful things?'

" 'Of course.'

" 'And do you hold to the agreement that Eros out of need for the good and beautiful things desires those very things of which he is in need?'

" 'Yes, I hold to it.'

" 'How then could he who is without a share in the beautiful and good things be a god?'

" 'In no way, it seems.'

" 'Do you see then,' she said, 'that you too hold that Eros is not a god?'

" 'What would Eros then be?' I said. 'A mortal?'

" 'Hardly that.'

" 'Well, what then?'

" 'Just as before,' she said, 'between mortal and immortal.'

" 'What is that, Diotima?'

" 'A great daemon, Socrates, for everything daemonic[15] is between god and mortal.'

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[15]*Daemonic (daimonion)* is either a neuter diminutive of *daimon* or a neuter adjective, related to *daimon* as divine (*theion*) is to god (*theos*). This neuter, in any case, is the theme of the dialogue up to Socrates' speech that concludes with "vulgar and low."

" 'With what kind of power?' I said.

" 'Interpreting and ferrying to gods things from human beings and to human beings things from gods: the requests and sacrifices of human beings, the orders and exchanges-for-sacrifices of gods; for it is in the middle of both and fills up the interval so that the whole itself has been bound together by it. Through this proceeds all divination and the art of the priests who deal with sacrifices, initiatory rituals, incantations, and every kind of soothsaying and magic. A god does not mingle with a human being; but through this occurs the whole intercourse and conversation of gods with human beings while they are awake and asleep. And he who is wise in things like this is a daemonic man; but he who is wise in anything else concerning either arts or handicrafts is vulgar and low. These daemons are many and of all kinds; and one of them is Eros.'

" 'Who is his father?' I said, 'And who is his mother?'

" 'It is rather long,' she said, 'to explain; but I shall tell you all the same. When Aphrodite was born, all the other gods as well as Poros [Resource] the son of Metis [Intelligence] were at a feast;[16] and when they had dined, Penia [Poverty] arrived to beg for something—as might be expected at a festivity—and she hung about near the door. Then Poros got drunk on nectar—for there was not yet wine—and, heavy of head, went into the garden of Zeus and slept. Then Penia, who because of her own lack of resources was plotting to have a child made out of Poros, reclined beside him and conceived Eros. It is for this reason that Eros has been the attendant and servant of Aphrodite, as he was conceived on her birthday; for he is by nature a lover in regard to the beautiful, and Aphrodite is beautiful. So because Eros is the son of Poros and Penia, his situation is in some such case as this. First of all, he is always poor; and he is far from being tender and beautiful, as the many believe, but is tough, squalid, shoeless, and homeless, always lying on the ground without a blanket or a bed, sleeping in doorways and along waysides in the open air; he has the nature of his mother, always dwelling with neediness. But in accordance with his father he plots to trap the beautiful and the good, and is courageous, stout, and keen, a skilled hunter, always weaving devices, desirous of practical wisdom

[16]Metis is the first goddess Zeus marries after the wars among the gods are over. He is warned in time not to allow her child Athena to be born, lest Athena's children overthrow him; he swallows Metis, and Athena is later born from the head of Zeus (see Hesiod, *Theogony*, 886–900).

and inventive, philosophizing through all his life, a skilled magician, druggist, sophist. And his nature is neither immortal nor mortal; but sometimes on the same day he flourishes and lives, whenever he has resources; and sometimes he dies, but gets to live again through the nature of his father. And as that which is supplied to him is always gradually flowing out, Eros is never either without resources nor wealthy, but is in between wisdom and lack of understanding. For here is the way it is: No one of the gods philosophizes and desires to become wise—for he *is* so—nor if there is anyone else who is wise, does he philosophize. Nor, in turn, do those who lack understanding philosophize and desire to become wise; for it is precisely this that makes the lack of understanding so difficult—that if a man is not beautiful and good, nor intelligent, he has the opinion that that is sufficient for him. Consequently, he who does not believe that he is in need does not desire that which he does not believe he needs.'

" 'Then who, Diotima, are the philosophizers,' I said, 'if they are neither the wise nor those who lack understanding?'

" 'By now it is perfectly plain even to a child,' she said, 'that they are those between them both, of whom Eros would be one. For wisdom is one of the most beautiful things, and Eros is love in regard to the beautiful; and so Eros is—necessarily—a philosopher; and as a philosopher he is between being wise and being without understanding. His manner of birth is responsible for this, for he is of a wise and resourceful father, and an unwise and resourceless mother. Now the nature of the daemon, dear Socrates, is this; but as for the one whom you believed to be Eros, it is not at all surprising that you had this impression. You believed, in my opinion, as I conjecture from what you say, that the beloved is Eros, and is not that which loves. It is for this reason, I believe, that Eros seemed to you to be wholly beautiful. For the beloved thing is truly beautiful, delicate, perfect, and most blessed; but that which loves has another kind of look, the sort that I just explained.'

"And I said, 'All right, stranger, what you say is fine. If Eros is of this sort, of what use is he for human beings?'

" 'It is this, Socrates,' she said, 'that I shall next try to teach you. Now, Eros is of that sort and was born in that way; and he is of the beautiful things, as you assert. But what if someone were to ask us, "What about those beautiful things of which Eros is, Socrates and Diotima?" It is more clearly ex-

pressed as follows: He who loves the beautiful things loves—what does he love?'

"And I said, 'That they be his.'

" 'But the answer,' she said, 'still longs for the following sort of question: What will he have who gets the beautiful things?'

"I said that I was hardly capable of giving a ready answer to this question.

" 'Well,' she said. 'What if someone changed his query and used the good instead of the beautiful? Come, Socrates, the lover of the good things loves: what does he love?'

" 'That they be his,' I said.

" 'And what will he who gets the good things have?'

" 'This,' I said, 'I can answer more adequately: he will be happy.'

" 'That,' she said, 'is because the happy are happy by the acquisition of good things; and there is no further need to ask, "For what consequence does he who wants to be happy want to be so?" But the answer is thought to be a complete one.'

" 'What you say is true,' I said.

" 'This wanting and this eros, do you suppose they are common to all human beings, and all want the good things to be theirs always, or how do you mean it?'

" 'That way,' I said. 'They are common to all.'

" 'Why is it, then, Socrates,' she said, 'that we deny that everyone loves—given, that is, that everyone loves the same things and always—but we say that some love and some do not?'

" 'I too,' I said, 'am amazed.'

" 'Well,' she said, 'don't persist in your amazement; for we detach from eros a certain kind of eros and give it the name eros, imposing upon it the name of the whole; while in the other cases we employ several different names.'

" 'What are those?' I said.

" 'Like the following: You know that "making" has a wide range; for, you see, every kind of making is responsible for anything whatsoever that is on the way from what is not to what is. And thus all the productions that are dependent on the arts are makings, and all the craftsmen engaged in them are makers.'

" 'What you say is true.'

" 'But nevertheless,' she said, 'you know that not all craftsmen are called makers but have other names; and one part is separated off from all of-making—that which is concerned with music and meters—and is addressed by the name of the whole.

For this alone is called poetry; and those who have this part of making are poets.'

" 'What you say is true,' I said.

" 'So too in the case of eros. In brief, eros is the whole desire of good things and of being happy, "the greatest and all-beguiling eros." But those who turn toward it in many other ways, in terms of either money-making, love of gymnastics, or philosophy, are neither said to love nor called lovers; whereas those who earnestly apply themselves to a certain single kind, get the name of the whole, love, and are said to love and called lovers.'

" 'What you say is probably true,' I said.

" 'And there is a certain account,' she said, 'according to which those who seek their own halves are lovers. But my speech denies that eros is of a half or of a whole—unless, comrade, that half or whole can be presumed to be really good; for human beings are willing to have their own feet and hands cut off, if their opinion is that their own are no good. For I suspect that each does not cleave to his own (unless one calls the good one's own and belonging to oneself, and the bad alien to oneself) since there is nothing that human beings love other than the good. Or is it your opinion that they do?'

" 'No, by Zeus,' I said, 'that is not my opinion.'

" 'Then,' she said, 'is it to be said unqualifiedly that human beings love the good?'

" 'Yes,' I said.

" 'What about this? Mustn't it be added,' she said, 'that they love the good to be theirs?'

" 'It must be added.'

" 'And not only that it be theirs,' she said, 'but always as well?'

" 'This too must be added.'

" 'So, in sum,' she said, 'eros is of the good's being one's own always.'

" 'What you say is most true,' I said.

" 'Since eros is always this,' she said, 'then in what manner and in what activity would the earnestness and intensity of those who pursue the good be called eros. What in fact are they doing when they act so? Can you tell?'

" 'If I could, Diotima, then I should not, you know, in admiration of your wisdom,' I said, 'resort to you to learn this very thing.'

" 'Well, I shall tell you,' she said. 'Their deed is bringing

to birth in beauty both in terms of the body and in terms of the soul.'

" 'Whatever it is that you mean,' I said, 'is in need of divination, and I do not begin to understand.'

" 'Well, I shall speak more clearly,' she said. 'All human beings, Socrates,' she said, 'conceive both in terms of the body and in terms of the soul, and whenever they are at a certain age, their nature desires to give birth; but it is incapable of giving birth in ugliness, but only in beauty, for the being together of man and woman is a bringing to birth. This thing, pregnancy and bringing to birth, is divine, and it is immortal in the animal that is mortal. It is impossible for this to happen in the unfitting; and the ugly is unfitting with everything divine, but the beautiful is fitting. So Kallone [Beauty] is the Moira [Fate] and Eileithyia[17] for birth. It is for these reasons that whenever the pregnant draws near to beauty, it becomes glad and in its rejoicing dissolves and then gives birth and produces offspring; but whenever it draws near to ugliness, then, downcast and in pain, it contracts inwardly, turns away, shrinks up, and does not produce offspring, but checking the course of the pregnancy, has a hard time of it. So this is why someone who is pregnant, with breasts already swelling, flutters so much around the beautiful, because the one who has the beautiful releases him from great labor pains. For eros is not, Socrates,' she said, 'of the beautiful, as you believe.'

" 'Well, what then?'

" 'It is of engendering and bringing to birth in the beautiful.'

" 'All right,' I said.

" 'It is more than all right,' she said. 'And why is eros of engendering? Because engendering is born forever and is immortal as far as that can happen to a mortal being. From what has been agreed to, it is necessary to desire immortality with good, provided eros is of the good's always being one's own. So it is necessary from this argument that eros be of immortality too.'

"All of these things she used to teach me whenever she made her speeches about erotics. And once she also asked, 'What do you believe, Socrates, is the cause of this eros and desire? Or aren't you aware how uncanny is the disposition of all the beasts (the footed as well as the winged) whenever they desire to produce offspring? They are all ill and of an erotic disposition, first concerning actual intercourse with one another, then later concerning the nurture of what is generated. And they

[17]Fate and Eileithyia are goddesses who preside over birth, and Kallone is a cult name of Artemis-Hecate.

are ready to fight to the finish, the weakest against the strongest, for the sake of those they have generated, and to die on their behalf; and they are willingly racked by starvation and stop at nothing to nourish their offspring. One might suppose,' she said, 'that human beings do this from calculation; but as for the beasts, what is the cause of their erotic disposition's being of this sort? Can you say?'

"And I again said that I did not know; and she said, 'Do you really think you will ever become skilled in erotics, if you do not understand this?'

" 'But you see, Diotima, that is the reason—as I said just now—why I have come to you: I know I am in need of teachers. But do tell me the cause of these things as well as of the rest that concern erotics.'

" 'If you put your trust,' she said, 'in the statement that by nature eros is of that which we have often agreed to, don't persist in your amazement. For in the eros of the beasts, in terms of the same argument as that concerning men, the mortal nature seeks as far as possible to be forever and immortal. Mortal nature is capable of immortality only in this way, the way of generation, because it is always leaving behind another that is young to replace the old. For while each one of the animals is said to live and be the same (for example, one is spoken of as the same from the time one is a child until one is an old man; and though he never has the same things in himself, nevertheless, he is called the same), he is forever becoming young in some respects as he suffers losses in other respects: his hair, flesh, bones, blood, and his whole body. And this is so not only in terms of the body but also in terms of the soul; his ways, character, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains, fears, each of these things is never present as the same for each, but they are partly coming to be and partly perishing. And what is far stranger still is that in the case of our sciences too not only are some coming to be while others are perishing (and we are never the same in terms of the sciences either); but also each single one of the sciences is affected in the same way. For studying, as it is called, is done on the grounds that the science is passing out from us; for forgetfulness is the exiting of science; and studying, by instilling a fresh memory again to replace the departing one, preserves the science, so that it may be thought to be the same. For in this way every mortal thing is preserved; not by being absolutely the same forever, as the divine is, but by the fact that that which is departing and growing old leaves behind another

young thing that is as it was. By this device, Socrates,' she said, 'the mortal shares in immortality, both body and all the rest; but the immortal has a different way. So do not be amazed if everything honors by nature its own offshoot; for it is for the sake of immortality that this zeal and eros attend everything.'

"And when I had heard her speech I was amazed and said, 'Really!' I said. 'Wisest Diotima, is it truly like this?'

"And she, like the perfect Sophists, said, 'Know it well, Socrates,' she said, 'inasmuch as in the case of human beings, if you were willing to glance at their love of honor, you would be amazed at their irrationality unless you understand what I have said and reflect how uncanny their disposition is made by their love of renown, "and their setting up immortal fame for eternity"; and for the sake of fame even more than for their children, they are ready to run all risks, to exhaust their money, to toil at every sort of toil, and to die. For do you suppose,' she said, 'that Alcestis would have died for Admetus' sake, or Achilles would have died after Patroclus, or your own Codrus would have died before his sons for the sake of their kingship, if they had not believed that there would be an immortal remembering of their virtue, which we now retain? Far from it,' she said, 'but I believe that all do all things for the sake of immortal virtue and a famous reputation of that sort; and the better they are, so much the more is it thus; for they love the immortal. Now there are those who are pregnant in terms of their bodies,' she said, 'and they turn rather to women and are erotic in this way, furnishing for themselves through the procreation of children immortality, remembrance, and happiness (as they believe) for all future time. But there are others who are pregnant in terms of the soul—for these, in fact,' she said, 'are those who in their souls even more than in their bodies conceive those things that it is appropriate for soul to conceive and bear. And what is appropriate for soul? Prudence and the rest of virtue; it is of these things that all the poets and all the craftsmen who are said to be inventive are procreators; and by far the greatest and most beautiful part of prudence,' she said, 'is the arranging and ordering of the affairs of cities and households. Its name is moderation and justice. So whenever someone from youth onward is pregnant in his soul with these virtues, if he is divine and of suitable age, then he desires to give birth and produce offspring. And he goes round in search, I believe, of the beautiful in which he might generate; for he will never generate in the ugly. So it is beautiful bodies rather than ugly ones to which he cleaves because he is pregnant; and if

he meets a beautiful, generous, and naturally gifted soul, he cleaves strongly to the two (body and soul) together. And to this human being he is at once fluent in speeches about virtue—of what sort the good man must be and what he must practice—and he tries to educate him. So in touching the one who is beautiful, I suspect, and in association with him, he engenders and gives birth to offspring with which he was long pregnant; and whether the [lover] is present or absent he holds the beautiful one in memory, and nurtures with him that which has been generated in common. Therefore, those of this sort maintain a greater association and firmer friendship with one another than do those who have children in common, because the children they share in common are more beautiful and more immortal. And everyone would choose to have for himself children like these rather than the human kind; and if one looks at Homer, Hesiod, and the other good poets, one envies them: what offspring of themselves they have left behind! For as these offspring are in their own right immortal, they supply the poets with immortal fame and memory. And if you want,' she said, 'think of the children that Lycurgus left behind in Sparta, the preservers of Sparta and, to exaggerate a little, of Greece. Solon too is honored among you through his engendering of the laws; and other men as well in many other regions, among Greeks and among barbarians, by their showing forth of many beautiful deeds, have engendered every kind of virtue. It is to these that many sanctuaries are now dedicated through children of this kind; while through the human sort there are no sanctuaries for anyone yet.

" 'Now perhaps, Socrates, you too might be initiated into these erotics; but as for the perfect revelations—for which the others are means, if one were to proceed correctly on the way—I do not know if you would be able to be initiated into them. Now I shall speak,' she said. 'I shall not falter in my zeal; do try to follow, if you are able. He who is to move correctly in this matter must begin while young to go to beautiful bodies. And first of all, if the guide is guiding correctly, he must love one body and there generate beautiful speeches. Then he must realize that the beauty that is in any body whatsoever is related to that in another body; and if he must pursue the beauty of looks, it is great folly not to believe that the beauty of all bodies is one and the same. And with this realization he must be the lover of all beautiful bodies and in contempt slacken this [erotic] intensity for only one body, in the belief that it is petty. After this he must

believe that the beauty in souls is more honorable than that in the body. So that even if someone who is decent in his soul has only a slight youthful charm, the lover must be content with it, and love and cherish him, and engender and seek such speeches as will make the young better; in order that [the lover], on his part, may be compelled to behold the beautiful in pursuits and laws, and to see that all this is akin to itself, so that he may come to believe that the beauty of the body is something trivial. And after these pursuits, he must lead [the beloved] on to the sciences, so that he [himself, the lover] may see the beauty of sciences, and in looking at the beautiful, which is now so vast, no longer be content like a lackey with the beauty in one, of a boy, of some human being, or of one practice, nor be a sorry sort of slave and petty calculator; but with a permanent turn to the vast open sea of the beautiful, behold it and give birth—in ungrudging philosophy—to many beautiful and magnificent speeches and thoughts; until, there strengthened and increased, he may discern a certain single philosophical science, which has as its object the following sort of beauty. Try to pay as close attention as you can,' she said. 'Whoever has been educated up to this point in erotics, beholding successively and correctly the beautiful things, in now going to the perfect end of erotics shall suddenly glimpse something wonderfully beautiful in its nature—that very thing, Socrates, for whose sake alone all the prior labors were undertaken—something that is, first of all, always being and neither coming to be nor perishing, nor increasing nor passing away; and secondly, not beautiful in one respect and ugly in another, nor at one time so, and at another time not—either with respect to the beautiful or the ugly—nor here beautiful and there ugly, as being beautiful to some and ugly to others; nor in turn will the beautiful be imagined by him as a kind of face or hands or anything else in which body shares, nor as any speech nor any science, and not as being somewhere in something else (for example, in an animal, or in earth, or in heaven, or in anything else), but as it is alone by itself and with itself, always being of a single form; while all other beautiful things that share in it do so in such a way that while it neither becomes anything more or less, nor is affected at all, the rest do come to be and perish. So whenever anyone begins to glimpse that beauty as he goes on up from these things through the correct practice of pederasty, he must come close to touching the perfect end. For this is what it is to proceed correctly, or to be led by another, to erotics—beginning

from these beautiful things here, always to proceed on up for the sake of that beauty, using these beautiful things here as steps: from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; and from beautiful bodies to beautiful pursuits; and from pursuits to beautiful lessons; and from lessons to end at that lesson, which is the lesson of nothing else than the beautiful itself; and at last to know what is beauty itself. It is at this place in life, in beholding the beautiful itself, my dear Socrates,' the Mantinean stranger said, 'that it is worth living, if—for a human being—it is [worth living] at any place. Should you ever see the beautiful itself, it will be your opinion that it is not to be compared to gold and garments and the beautiful boys and youths at whose sight you are now thunderstruck. And you and many others are prepared, in seeing the beloved and in always being with him, neither to eat nor drink, if it were somehow possible, but only to behold him and be with him. What then,' she said, 'do we believe happens to one, if he gets to see the beautiful itself, pure, clean, unmixed, and not infected with human flesh, colors, or a lot of other mortal foolishness, and can glimpse the divine beautiful itself as being of a single shape? Do you believe,' she said, 'that life would prove to be a sorry sort of thing, when a human being gazes in the direction of the beautiful and beholds it with the instrument with which he must and is together with it? Or don't you realize,' she said, 'that only here, in seeing in the way the beautiful is seeable, will he get to engender not phantom images of virtue—because he does not lay hold of a phantom—but true, because he lays hold of the true; and that once he has given birth to and cherished true virtue, it lies within him to become dear to god and, if it is possible for any human being, to become immortal as well?'

"Here, Phaedrus and you others, is what Diotima declared and what I am convinced of. And in this state of conviction, I try to persuade others that for this possession one could not easily get a better co-worker with human nature than Eros. Accordingly, I assert that every real man must honor Eros, as I myself honor erotics and train myself exceptionally in them; and I urge it on the rest, and now and always I eulogize the power and courage of Eros as far as I am able. Regard this speech, then, Phaedrus, if you want to, as spoken in eulogy of Eros; but if not, and your pleasure is to give it some other kind of name, so name it."

When Socrates had said this, some praised it; and Aristoph-

anes tried to say something, because Socrates in speaking had mentioned him and referred to his speech. But suddenly a hammering on the courtyard door made a lot of noise—revelers they thought—and they heard the sound of a flute girl. Then Agathon said, "Boys, go look. And if it is any one of our close friends, invite him in; but if not, say that we are not drinking but have already stopped."

Not much later they heard the voice of Alcibiades in the courtyard, very drunk and shouting loudly, asking where Agathon was and commanding them to lead him to Agathon. Then the flute girl who—together with some other of his attendants—supported him and led him before them; and he stood at the door, thickly crowned with ivy and violets, with many fillets on his head. And he said, "Men, hail! Will you welcome a man who's terribly drunk as a fellow drinker? Or shall we go away just as soon as we have wreathed Agathon, for which single purpose we have come? For I, you see," he said, "could not come yesterday, but now I have come with fillets on my head, so that from my own head I might wreathe the head of the wisest and most beautiful—well! And if I shall say that, what then? Will you laugh at me because I am drunk? But all the same, even if you do laugh, I know well that I am telling the truth. Well, tell me on the spot, shall I enter on the said conditions or not? Will you join me in drink or not?"

Then they all applauded loudly and asked him to enter and lie down; and Agathon summoned him. And he came led by his creatures; and as he was taking off the fillets to do the crowning—he had had them before his eyes and so did not observe Socrates—he sat down alongside Agathon, between him and Socrates; for Socrates had made room for Alcibiades when he saw him. On sitting down he embraced Agathon and bound on the fillets.

Then Agathon said, "Take off Alcibiades' shoes, boys, so that he may lie down in the third place."

"Certainly," Alcibiades said, "but who is here as our third fellow drinker?" And at once he turned around and saw Socrates; and as soon as he saw him he leapt up and said, "Heracles! What is the meaning of this? Socrates is here? Once again you lie in ambush; and just as is your habit, you appear suddenly wherever I believed you were least likely to be. And now, why have you come? And why did you lie down here? For it is not with Aristophanes, or with anyone else who is—or wants to

be—laughable that you lie; but you managed it so that you might lie down beside the most beautiful of those in this room."

And Socrates said, "Agathon, consider! Are you going to defend me? The love I have of this human being has proved quite bothersome. For since the time that I first loved him, it is no longer possible for me to look at or converse with even one beauty; or else in jealousy and envy of me he does amazing things, and abuses me and hardly keeps his hands off me. Take care lest he do something now, and do reconcile us; or if he tries to use force, defend me, since I really quake with fear at his madness and love of lovers."

"But," said Alcibiades, "reconciliation between you and me is impossible. Well, I shall take my vengeance on you for this at another time; but now, Agathon," he said, "spare us some of the fillets, so that I may wreathe this amazing head of his; and he need not reproach me because I wreathed you, and not him; for he conquers all human beings in speeches, and not just the day before yesterday as you did, but at all times." And at once he took some of the fillets, wreathed Socrates, and lay down.

And when he lay down, he said, "All right, men. In my opinion you're sober. This cannot be allowed; you must drink, for we have agreed to it. And I choose as leader of the drinking—until you have drunk enough—myself. But let someone do the fetching, Agathon, if there is any large beaker. But there is no need really; just bring that wine cooler there, boy," he said, as he saw that it had a capacity of more than eight pints. Once he saw that it got filled he was the first to drink it off; and then, as he asked that it be poured for Socrates, he said, "It is no sophistic stratagem of mine against Socrates, men; for as much as one asks him to, so much he drinks off without any risk of getting more drunk."

Then the boy poured and Socrates drank. And Eryximachus said, "What are we to do, Alcibiades? Is this to be our way, to say nothing at all over our cups, nor sing anything, but simply to drink like the thirsty?"

Then Alcibiades said, "Eryximachus, best son of the best and most moderate father, hail!"

"You too," Eryximachus said. "But what shall we do?"

"Whatever you order. For we must obey you—

'For a physician is worth the equivalent of many others.'[18]

[18]Homer, *Iliad*, 11.514.

Prescribe what you want."

"Listen then," Eryximachus said. "It was our resolution before you entered that each of us in turn, beginning on the left, should make as fair a speech as he could about Eros, and eulogize him. Now all the rest of us have spoken; and since you have not spoken but have drunk up, it is just that you speak. And after your speech prescribe for Socrates whatever you want; and then let him prescribe for him on his right, and so on for the rest."

"Well, Eryximachus," Alcibiades said, "what you say is fine, but I am afraid it is not quite fair for a drunkard to be matched against the speeches of the sober. And at the same time, you blessed innocent, has Socrates really convinced you of anything he just said? Don't you know that things are exactly the opposite of what he was saying? For if I praise anyone other than himself, whether god or human being, while he is present, he will not keep his hands off me."

"Hush," Socrates said.

"No, by Poseidon," Alcibiades said. "Say nothing against this, since there is no one else I should praise while you were present."

"Well, do so, if you want," Eryximachus said. "Praise Socrates."

"What are you saying?" Alcibiades said. "Is it thought that I should, Eryximachus? Shall I assault the man and take vengeance on him in your presence?"

"You there," Socrates said. "What do you have in mind? To praise me for the sake of raising a laugh? Or what will you do?"

"I shall tell the truth. See if you allow it."

"Well, if it is the truth," he said, "I both allow and order you to tell it."

"Your word is my command," Alcibiades said. "Now you do as follows. If I say anything that is untrue, check me in the middle if you want to and say in what respect I am telling a lie; for as far as my will goes, I shall not lie. Now if in reminiscing I speak of one thing and then another, don't be surprised; for it is not at all easy for me in the condition I am in to enumerate fluently and consecutively your strangeness.

"I shall try in this way, men, to praise Socrates, through likenesses. Now he perhaps will suppose it is for raising a laugh; but the likeness will be for the sake of the truth, not for the sake of the laughable. I declare that he is most strictly like those

silenuses[19] that sit in the shops of herm sculptors, the ones that craftsmen make holding reed pipes or flutes; and if they are split in two and opened up, they show that they have images of gods within. And I declare, in turn, that he bears a likeness to the satyr Marsyas. Now, that you are like them at least in looks, Socrates, surely not even you would dispute; and as for your likeness to them in other respects, just listen to what I have to say. You are hybristic, are you not? For if you do not agree, I shall get witnesses. Well, aren't you a flute player? You are far more marvelous, to be sure, than Marsyas. He used to charm human beings by means of instruments, with the power from his mouth, as anyone still does today who plays his flute songs. For I ascribe to Marsyas as what Olympus fluted since Marsyas had taught him; so that the songs of Olympus, whether a good flutist or a sorry sort of flute girl should play them, are the only ones—because they are divine—that cause possession and reveal those who are in need of the gods and initiatory rituals. And you differ from him only in that you do the same thing with bare words without instruments. We, at any rate, whenever we hear the speeches of anyone else—no matter how good a speaker he is—just about no one gets concerned. But whenever any one of us hears you or another speaking your speeches, even if the speaker is very poor, regardless of whether a woman, man, or lad hears them, we are thunderstruck and possessed. I, at any rate, men, were I not going to be thought utterly drunk, should tell you on oath exactly how his speeches have affected me, and still do to this very day. For whenever I listen, my heart jumps far more than the Corybants', and tears pour out under the power of his speeches; and I see that they affect many many others in the same way. When I heard Pericles and other good speakers, I thought they spoke well, but they could not affect me in any way like that, nor did my soul grow troubled and become distressed at my slavish condition. But I had so often been put in this state by this Marsyas you see before you that I came to the opinion that it was not worth living in the way I am. Now, Socrates, you will not say that this is not true. And even now I know within myself that were I willing to lend

[19]Silenus was a woodland god, depicted as an old man with the ears of a horse, often drunk, and riding an ass or wine jar. If caught, Silenus was supposed to reveal his wisdom; but nothing is known of his wisdom except that he said that it was better not to be born. He was associated since the sixth century with Dionysus. The *sileni* or silenuses were half-gods or spirits, with the same characteristics as Silenus, but often confused with the satyrs.

my ears, I should not be capable of holding out but should be affected in the same way. For he compels me to agree that, though I am still in need of much myself, I neglect myself and handle instead the affairs of the Athenians. So it was by main force that I stopped my ears and took off in flight, as if from the Sirens, in order that I might not sit here in idleness and grow old beside him. In regard to this human being alone have I been affected in a way that no one would suspect was in me—to feel shame before anyone at all. Only before him do I feel shame. For I know within myself that I am incapable of contradicting him or of saying that what he commands must not be done; and whenever I go away, I know within myself that I am doing so because I have succumbed to the honor I get from the many. So I have become a runaway and avoid him; and whenever I see him, I am ashamed of what has been agreed upon. And many is the time when I should see with pleasure that he is not among human beings; but again, if this should happen, I know well that I should be much more greatly distressed. I do not know what to do with this human being.

"And I and many others have been affected in such ways by the flute songs of this satyr here before us. But as to the rest, hear me tell how he is like those to whom I have likened him, and how amazing is the power he has. For know well that not one of you is acquainted with him; but I shall make it plain, inasmuch as I have started on it. You see that Socrates is erotically inclined to the beauties and is always around them, and that he is thunderstruck; and again that he is ignorant of everything and knows nothing. Now isn't this guise of his silenic? It certainly is. For he has wrapped this around himself on the outside, just as the carved silenus; but once he is opened up, do you suspect, fellow drinking men, how full he is of moderation? Know that he's not at all concerned if someone is beautiful—and he holds this in such great contempt that no one would believe it—any more than if someone is rich or has any other honor of those deemed blessed by the multitude. But he believes that all these possessions are worth nothing and that we are nothing, I tell you, and all his life he keeps on being ironical and playful to human beings. And when he is in earnest and opened up, I do not know if anyone has seen the images within; but I once saw them, and it was my opinion that they were so divine, golden, altogether beautiful, and amazing that one had to do just about whatever Socrates commanded. Believing him to be in earnest about my youthful beauty, I believed I had had a lucky find and an

amazing piece of good luck: I had the chance—if I gratified Socrates—to hear everything that he knew; for I used to take an amazing amount of pride in my youthful beauty. So with this in mind, though I previously was not in the habit of being alone with him without an attendant, I then sent the attendant away and was alone with him. (For the whole truth must be told you, but pay attention, and if I lie, Socrates, try and refute me.) So I was alone with him alone, men; and I believed he would converse with me at once in just the way a lover would converse with his beloved in isolation, and I rejoiced. But exactly nothing of the sort happened; but just as he used to do, he would converse with me; and having spent the day with me he would take his leave. After this I challenged him to join me in stripping; and I stripped along with him. Here, I thought, I shall get my way. So he joined me in stripping and often wrestled with me when no one else was present. And what need is there to say more? I got no advantage from it at all. And when I made no headway in this manner, I resolved that the man must be set upon by force and not be released, since I was already committed to the attempt, and now I had to find out what was really the matter. I invited him then to join me at supper, simply as a lover plots against a beloved. And he did not quickly yield to me in this, but in time, at any rate, he was persuaded. And when he came for the first time, he wanted, once he had dined, to go away. And then out of shame I let him go; but I renewed my plottings once more. And this time when we had dined I kept on conversing far into the night; and when he wanted to go away, I pretended that it was too late and compelled him to remain. So he took his rest in the bed next to me on which he had dined; and no one else slept in the room but ourselves. Now, what I have said up to this point in my speech could properly be told to anyone at all. And you would not hear any more from me than this were it not that, first of all, as the saying goes, wine—with boys and without boys—is truthful, and in the second place, that it is patently unjust for me, once I have come to the point of praising Socrates, to keep hidden his magnificently overweening deed. Furthermore, the affliction of a victim of the viper's bite is also mine. For they say, as you know, that anyone who has been so afflicted is unwilling to speak of what sort of thing it is except to those who themselves have been bitten, since they alone will recognize it and pardon him if his pain brought him to the point of doing and saying anything. Take me, for instance. I was bitten by a more painful viper in the place that is most liable to pain—the heart or

soul or whatever name it must have—bitten and struck by philosophical speeches, which grip in a more savage way than the viper, whenever they get a hold on a young soul that is not ill-favored by nature, and make it do and say anything whatsoever—and seeing in turn Phaedruses, Agathons, Eryximachuses, Pausaniases, Aristodemuses, as well as Aristophaneses . . . and what need is there to speak of Socrates and all the others? You all have shared in the philosophic madness and bacchic frenzy—so accordingly you all will hear; for you will pardon the things then done and now said. But you house servants—and if there is anyone else who is profane and rustic—put large gates over your ears.

"So, men, when the lamp was extinguished and the boys were outside, I resolved that I should in no way complicate the issue before him, but freely speak what were my opinions. And I nudged him and said, 'Socrates, are you asleep?' 'Certainly not,' he said. 'Do you know then what I have resolved?' 'What in particular?' he said. 'You, in my opinion,' I said, 'have proved to be the only deserving lover of mine; and it seems to me that you hesitate to mention it to me. Now I am in this state: I believe it is very foolish not to gratify you in this or anything else of mine—my wealth or my friends—that you need; for nothing is more important to me than that I become the best possible; and I believe that, as far as I am concerned, there is no one more competent than you to be a fellow helper to me in this. So I should be far more ashamed before men of good sense for not gratifying a man like you than I should be before the many and senseless for gratifying you.'

"And when he heard this, he said very ironically, and exactly as he is, and in his usual fashion, 'Really, my dear Alcibiades, you're no sucker if what you say about me is really true and there is some power in me through which you could become better. You must see, you know, an impossible beauty in me, a beauty very different from the fairness of form in yourself. So if, in observing my beauty, you are trying to get a share in it and to exchange beauty for beauty, you are intending to get far the better deal. For you are trying to acquire the truth of beautiful things in exchange for the seeming and opinion of beautiful things; and you really have in mind to exchange "gold for bronze."[20] But, blessed one, do consider better: without your being aware of it—I may be nothing. Thought, you know, begins to have keen eyesight when the sight of the eyes starts to decline from its peak; and you are still far from that.'

[20]Homer, *Iliad*, 6.236.

"And I heard this, and said, 'This is the way matters stand on my side—not one of my words has been said in a way different from what I think; but you yourself take whatever counsel you believe to be best for yourself and me.'

" 'Well,' he said, 'what you say is good; for in the future, after deliberating, we shall do whatever looks best to us two concerning these things and the rest.'

"So I, when I had heard and said these things, and had shot my darts as it were, thought he had been wounded. And I got up, and did not allow him to speak any more, but wrapped my mantle around him—for it was winter—and lay down under his blanket; and I threw my arms around this truly daemonic and amazing being, and lay down beside him the whole night. And not even in this, Socrates, will you say that I lie. But when I had done this, he so far prevailed over me and despised and laughed at my youthful beauty and committed an outrage against it (and in that regard I believed I was something special, men of the jury—for you are the judges of Socrates' arrogance) . . . for know well, by the gods, by the goddesses, that though I slept the night through with Socrates I got up without anything more untoward having happened than would have been the case if I had slept with my father or elder brother.

"So after this, what notion do you suppose I had? I believed I had been dishonored, and yet I still admired his nature, moderation, and courage; I had met a human being whose prudence and endurance were such as I believed I should never encounter. Consequently, I did not know how I could be angry at him and be deprived of his association; nor did I have any resources whereby I could attract him. I knew well that—on all sides—he was far more invulnerable to money than Ajax was to iron; and even at that one point where I believed he could be taken, he had escaped me. So I was in a quandary; and enslaved by this human being as no one has been by anyone else, I wandered about in distraction. Now, all this had happened to me earlier; and after this we went together on the expedition to Potidaea, and we shared our mess there. Now first of all he faced trials not only better than I did but better than all others. Whenever we were cut off somewhere and compelled to go without food, as happens in campaigns, the others were nothing compared to him in self-control. And again at festivities he alone was able to take pleasure in other things, and in drinking as well; for even though he wasn't willing to drink, whenever he was compelled to do so, he outdid everybody; and what is the most

amazing thing of all, no human being has ever seen Socrates drunk. Now it is my opinion that there will soon be a test of this. And again, in regard to resistance against the winter—for winters are terrible there—all the rest that he did was amazing. And once when the frost was the most terrible imaginable, and no one went outdoors (or if any did go out, they wrapped themselves in an amazing number of garments and put on shoes and tied up their feet in felt and sheepskins), he went out among them with the same sort of mantle as he wore at any time, and without shoes he marched through the ice more easily than the others did shod; and the soldiers looked askance at him as if he were despising them. And that is the way things were.

" 'What sort of thing the strong man did and dared'[21] there on campaign once, is worth hearing. Once, he had gotten a thought, and he stood on the same spot from dawn on, considering it; and when he made no progress, he did not let up but stood searching. And it was already noon, and the men became aware of it; and in amazement one said to another that Socrates had stood there in reflection since dawn. And finally some Ionians, when it was evening and they had dined—for it was then summer—brought out their pallets and slept in the cold and watched to see if he would also stand during the night. And he stood until it was dawn and the sun came up; and then having made a prayer to the sun he went away. And in combat, if you want to hear about it—for it is just to credit him with this—once when there was a battle for which the generals gave me the prize of excellence, no other human being saved me but he; for he was not willing to leave me wounded, but saved both myself and my weapons. And I even then, Socrates, asked the generals to offer you the prize of excellence. And in this too you will not blame me and say that I lie; but as a matter of fact, when the generals looked to my rank and wanted to offer me the prize of excellence, you proved more eager than the generals that I take it rather than yourself. Furthermore, men, it was worthwhile to behold Socrates when the army retreated in flight from Delium; for I happened to be there on horseback and he was a hoplite. The soldiers were then in rout, and while he and Laches were retreating together, I came upon them by chance. And as soon as I saw them, I at once urged the two of them to take heart, and I said I would not leave them behind. I had an even finer opportunity to observe Socrates there than I had had at Potidaea, for I was less in fear because I was on

[21]Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.242, 271.

horseback. First of all, how much more sensible he was than Laches; and secondly, it was my opinion, Aristophanes (and this point is yours); that walking there just as he does here in Athens, 'stalking like a pelican, his eyes darting from side to side,'[22] quietly on the lookout for friends and foes, he made it plain to everyone even at a great distance that if one touches this real man, he will defend himself vigorously. Consequently, he went away safely, both he and his comrade; for when you behave in war as he did, then they just about do not even touch you; instead they pursue those who turn in headlong flight.

"Now, one could praise Socrates for many other amazing things; but whereas for the rest of his pursuits—one might perhaps say the like about someone else as well—what deserves all wonder is that respect in which he is like no human being, neither the ancients nor those of the present day. For one might liken Brasidas and others to such a one as Achilles was; and, in turn, liken the sort that Pericles was to both Nestor and Antenor (and there are others as well); and of the rest one might make likenesses in the same way. But the sort that this human being in his strangeness proved to be, both in himself and in his speeches, one could not even come close to finding, whether one looked among the men of today or among the ancients; unless, after all, one were to liken him in himself and in his speeches to those I say—to no human being but to silenuses and satyrs.

"And what is more, I omitted to say at the beginning that his speeches too are most like the silenuses when opened up. For were one willing to hear Socrates' speeches, they would at first look altogether laughable. The words and phrases that they wrap around themselves on the outside are like that, the very hide of a hybristic satyr.[23] For he talks of pack-asses, blacksmiths, shoemakers, and tanners, and it looks as if he is always saying the same things through the same things; and hence every inexperienced and foolish human being would laugh at his speeches. But if one sees them opened up and gets oneself inside them, one will find, first, that they alone of speeches have sense inside; and, second, that they are most divine and have the largest number of images of virtue in them; and that they apply to the largest area, indeed to the whole area that it is proper to examine for one who is going to be beautiful and good.

"Here, men, is what I praise Socrates for; and I mixed in with it what, in turn, I blame him for, when I told you how he

[22]Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 362.

[23]An allusion to the flaying of Marsyas by Apollo.

committed an outrage against me. And what is more, he not only did this to me, but to Charmides the son of Glaucon, Euthydemus the son of Diocles, and many many others—for while deceiving them into thinking of him as the lover, he brings it about that he is the beloved rather than the lover. It is this that I am telling you, Agathon. Do not be deceived by him; but with the knowledge of our afflictions be on your guard, and do not, as in the proverb, like a fool realize it after you have suffered."

When Alcibiades said this, there was laughter at his outspokenness because it was thought that he was still erotically inclined toward Socrates. Then Socrates said, "You are sober, in my opinion, Alcibiades, for otherwise you would never have so elegantly cast a screen about yourself and tried to conceal why you said all this; for you spoke of it as if it were a side-issue by inserting it at the end, as though you had not said everything for its sake—to set Agathon and me at odds, believing that I must love you and no one else, and that Agathon must be loved by you and by no one else. But you did not get away with it; this satyr and silenic drama of yours was quite obvious. Well, my dear Agathon, see that he does not get the advantage—and prepare yourself against anyone setting you and me at odds."

Then Agathon said, "Why, Socrates, I am afraid that what you say is true. My evidence is the fact that he lay down between you and me so that he may hold us apart. Well, he will not get the advantage, but I shall come and lie down beside you."

"Yes," Socrates said, "do come lie down in the place beside me."

"Zeus!" Alcibiades said. "What the fellow does to me! He believes he must surpass me everywhere. Well, if nothing else, you wondrous being, let Agathon lie down between us."

"But that is impossible," Socrates said. "For you praised me, and I in turn must praise the one on the right; surely if Agathon lies down next to you, he will not praise me again, will he, before he has been praised by me? But leave it as it is, daemonic being, and do not begrudge the lad's being eulogized by me, for I want very much to sing his praises."

"Now I get it, Alcibiades," Agathon said. "It is impossible for me to remain here; and I shall not fail to change my place so that I may be praised by Socrates."

"This is the usual thing," Alcibiades said. "When Socrates is present it is impossible for someone else to get hold of the

beauties, just as now you see how resourcefully he has found a persuasive argument to get Agathon to lie down beside him."

Now Agathon got up to lie down beside Socrates; but suddenly a large crowd of revelers came to the door; and finding it open—someone had gone out—they walked straight in among the guests and lay down. And everything was full of commotion, and everybody was compelled—but no longer with any order—to drink a great deal of wine. Now Aristodemus said that Eryximachus, Phaedrus, and some others went away, but he himself was overtaken by sleep. And he slept very deeply, because the night was far gone and the cocks were already singing when he woke toward daybreak. And on awakening he saw that the rest were sleeping or had gone away; but Agathon, Aristophanes, and Socrates were the only ones who were still awake, and they were drinking from a large cup, passing it from left to right. Socrates was conversing with them. And Aristodemus said, he did not remember the other points of the speeches—for he was not only absent at the start, but was dozing—however, the chief point, he said, was that Socrates was compelling them to agree that the same man should know how to make comedy and tragedy; and that he who is by art a tragic poet is also a comic poet. They were compelled to admit this, though they were not following too well and were nodding. Aristophanes went to sleep first, and then, when it was already day, Agathon. Then Socrates, having put them to bed, got up and went away, and he (Aristodemus) followed, just as he was accustomed to; and Socrates went to the Lyceum, washed up, and spent the rest of his day just as he did at any other time. And once he had passed the time in this way, toward evening he took his rest at home.